

Martial 1241

Chapter 1241, Retreating

Seeing that Yang Kai had been easily trapped, the Firebird once again showed a proud and disdainful expression, opening its mouth to spit out a sharp flame blade that pierced straight towards Yang Kai with unstoppable might.

Evidently it wanted to use this opportunity to take Yang Kai's life.

Kacha...

The hundred-plus Grand Heavenly Shields in front of Yang Kai shattered and the purple shield was only able to block this attacks momentum for a moment before its light faded, its spirituality severely damaged, and it was knocked aside.

In the blink of an eye, the blade of flame arrived in front of Yang Kai and was on the verge of reaping his life.

Just then, a dark blade-like attack flew out of from Yang Kai, one that seemed to be silently tearing space apart without emitting the slightest energy fluctuation, making it all but impossible to detect.

Space Blade!

Yang Kai understood that with just Spiritual Energy and Saint Qi methods, he wouldn't be able to compete with this Artefact Spirit that actually understood how to use its own Artefact Refining Furnace, something that came as a great shock to him.

The Artefact Spirit by itself was extremely difficult to deal with, but now that it was using the furnace that gave birth to it, it became even fiercer. Fighting with it like this was tantamount to courting death!

So Yang Kai had used his trump card without hesitation.

Yang Kai was quite confident in his Space Blade. Although the Artefact Spirit's methods were extraordinary, and it was inherently proficient in the use of Fire Attribute principles, Space Force was also a powerful and rarely seen method. Regarding the Dao of Space, Yang Kai knew he had not yet achieved a grand accomplishment in his comprehension, but using it to deal with this Artefact Spirit shouldn't be an issue.

Sure enough, when the Space Blade met the flame blade, it began to warp and twist as it destabilized under the powerful Fire Attribute aura and it soon disappeared, but before it did, it swallowed the flame blade and exiled it to The Void.

Yang Kai had managed to avert this crisis.

Without waiting for the Artefact Spirit to attack again, Yang Kai sent out several more Space Blades, half of them flying towards the Artefact Spirit while the other half circled around his body. The suppression holding down Yang Kai was instantly cut by this Space Blades and he regained his freedom of movement.

The moment he was able to use his Saint Qi again, Yang Kai leapt back and waved his hands, releasing a long Space Blade towards the red light curtain that was blocking the stone chamber's entrance, opening a crack in it large enough for him to safely pass through.

The next moment, Yang Kai's figure flickered and rushed into the several-thousand-metre long tunnel as the angry cries of the Artefact Spirit came from behind him.

His opponent had obviously been forced back by the Space Blade for a moment and had no time to care about the retreating Yang Kai.

Yang Kai didn't expect his Space Blades to be able to kill the Artefact Spirit. The Fire Attribute energy his opponent was able to control was both pure and dense, not something that could be completely consumed by Yang Kai's current Space Blade. Being able to take the Firebird by surprise and create an opportunity to escape was enough to satisfy Yang Kai for now.

Yang Kai's current plan was to leave this Earth Lung Fire Pond as quickly as possible and find another place to refine the Profound Yin Sunflower Water. Then, after his strength had improved, he could come to settle this score, if there was still time.

Unsurprisingly, Yang Kai had only run less than a thousand metres away before the Firebird overcame all of his Space Blades and a blisteringly hot aura appeared behind him.

Yang Kai increased his pace but when he looked back, his face couldn't help paling.

At the end of the tunnel, the Artefact Spirit had transformed into a ball of red light and was chasing after him, obviously reluctant to let him escape.

The entire passage filled with extreme heat. The Firebird had yet to even reach Yang Kai yet the walls around him were already beginning to warp under the rich fire aura.

Yang Kai pushed his speed even higher, but compared with this naturally born Artefact Spirit, he still felt a bit short. The exit of this tunnel back into the Earth Lung Fire Pond was getting closer, but the distance between himself and the Artefact Spirit was shrinking too quickly. Yang Kai's eyes flashed a savage light, but just as he was about to turn around and hit the Artefact Spirit again, a strange cry rang out behind him.

This cry clearly contained unwillingness and anger, and at the same time, the Fire Attribute aura which had permeated the entire passage quickly receded like an ocean wave.

Yang Kai was surprised and quickly turned back, a look of shock soon filling his face. Stopping in place, he stared at the scene behind him with interest.

At a position just over a hundred metres behind him, Yang Kai saw the Firebird struggling in place as a number of energy chains appeared on its body. The engraved runes on these chains were clearly a type of restriction that were tightly wrapped around the Firebird, binding it in place.

The Firebird only let out a few more cries before the chains suddenly shrank around its body.

The unwillingness in the Firebird's eyes grew more intense but in the next instant, its body exploded and the red glow filling the tunnel disappeared.

[Was it destroyed?] Yang Kai frowned, but thinking about it for a moment, he quickly denied such a possibility before releasing his Divine Sense to investigate the stone room.

Sure enough, inside the stone room, the originally hovering Artefact Refining Furnace had fallen to the ground again and returned to the quiet state Yang Kai had first seen it in. The strange bird pattern on this Artefact Refining Furnace's surface still existed, but unlike before, it now seemed to have become irritable and was constantly swimming about, seemingly trying to escape the Artefact Refining Furnace again but unable to do so.

Yang Kai quickly calmed down and wore a grin.

It turned out that this thing couldn't get too far from the Artefact Refining Furnace, and once it tried to, it would forcefully be taken back. This wasn't too surprising though, after all, the Firebird was the Artefact Spirit of this Artefact Refining Furnace, so the two were strongly connected.

After confirming that the Artefact Spirit had no way to pursue him further, Yang Kai breathed a sigh of relief and wiped the cold sweat from his forehead.

The battle just now had been one of the most dangerous Yang Kai had fought. Even when facing the Origin Returning Realm master brought by Xie Hong Wen last time, he was able to handle the situation with ease without worry about his life; after all, he had Yang Yan's Spirit Array to fall back on at the time.

However, this time, forced by that Artefact Spirit to fight in that stone room, Yang Kai had used all of his methods with the exception of his Demon Eye of Annihilation yet was still forced to flee in distress.

(Silavin: Do note that his Demonic Qi has merged with his Yang Qi so, he is sort of actively in his Bankai form.)

Yang Kai had barely been able to escape with his life from this Artefact Spirit, so if it had been another Saint King, they probably would have died on the spot.

Standing in the passage for a while, Yang Kai silently pondered. Since the Artefact Spirit couldn't chase him outside the stone room, there was no need for him to leave the Earth Lung Fire Pond. This was a rare treasure land. The environment outside in the fifth layer was quite good, but compared to this place, it was completely incomparable.

But there was no way Yang Kai would be able to use this stone room, so he could only try his luck with the other chamber next door.

Yang Kai didn't believe that there was an Artefact Spirit there too. It was a stroke of Heavenly fortune for such a thing to be born, so it should be absolutely impossible for there to be a second one here.

If by some chance there was a second Artefact Spirit though, Yang Kai would only be able to give up on this bottom level and use one of the stone chambers up above.

Thinking so, Yang Kai turned around and walked back out to the Earth Lung Fire Pond, a moment later diving into the right stone cave.

Just like the previous passageway, this one was a few thousand metres long, and at its end was a magnificent stone chamber.

Although Yang Kai didn't think there would be a second Artefact Spirit, he also didn't dare act carelessly. Standing at the entrance to this stone chamber, Yang Kai investigated the inside carefully, only relaxing after he discovered that the Origin King Grade Artefact Refining Furnace located at the centre of the chamber was scrapped.

If even the Artefact Refining Furnace had been ruined, there would naturally be no Artefact Spirit.

When Yang Kai's gaze swept across some Artefact Refining materials rich in aura stacked to the side of the chamber, his eyes brightened and he rushed inside to carefully check them.

Sure enough, there were blessings after a disaster. Yang Kai hadn't expected that in this last stone room there would be so many stored Artefact Refining materials.

And the grades of these materials was very high, all of them at least Origin Grade while the majority were actually Origin King Grade. All kinds of rare ores and materials from each of the five elements were present along with numerous Monster Beast materials arranged in a dazzling display.

Of course, although there were many materials here, some of them could no longer be used because they had been stored here for too long.

Yang Kai picked out the materials which were still useful while discarding the ones that couldn't be used. Smiling with satisfaction, he then continued to examine this stone room.

The layout here was almost identical to the stone room on the left. At the centre of the chamber was an Artefact Refining Furnace that was several metres tall along with a number of white orbs which were exuding the soft soothing light.

However, there were less of these light orbs in this room, only four rather than the eight. It seems that the owner of this stone room wasn't as highly ranked as the owner of the stone room on the left.

Yang Kai didn't dwell on this though and quickly walked over to the four stone tables, pouring his Saint Qi into them to close the stone room's Spirit Array.

After waiting for a long time, the ruined Artefact Refining Furnace finally cooled enough for Yang Kai to stuff it into his Space Ring.

Although this Artefact Refining Furnace was greatly damaged, it was originally Origin King Grade, so if he took it back and let Yang Yan take a look at it, perhaps it could be repaired. Even if it couldn't, taking it with him wasn't any extra effort.

Yang Kai had also collected several other damaged Origin King Grade Artefact Refining Furnaces before.

After receiving the Artefact Refining Furnace, an empty space appeared in the centre of the stone room. This empty space was engraved with an independent Spirit Array that, although small, was extremely complex. Yang Kai wasn't proficient in Spirit Arrays, but after entering and exiting several hundred of these stone chambers and deactivating so many normal arrays, he had gained a basic understanding of how these Spirit Arrays drew in and converted the pure Fire Attribute energy from the Earth Lung Fire Pond and channelled it into the Artefact Refining Furnaces.

Moreover, the four stone tables nearby had an added control effect. Depending on the number of stone tables activated, the rate and intensity of the power being extracted from the Earth Lung Fire Pond would change proportionally.

In other words, activating four of the stone tables at once would have a completely different effect from only activating a single one.

This design made Yang Kai very satisfied and he felt that the master who had arranged these Spirit Arrays really possessed extraordinary methods.

After having delayed things so long, Yang Kai wasn't going to waste any more time, quickly arriving at the spot originally occupied by the Artefact Refining Furnace and sitting down cross-legged.

Chapter 1242, Refining

A day later, Yang Kai opened his eyes.

Meditating for a day allowed him to adjust his condition to its optimal level. Immediately, he waved his hands and a number of delicate jade bottles and rare herbs appeared around him, all of them possessing rich and vigorous auras.

These things were the auxiliary materials that were required to refine the Profound Yin Sunflower Water. Zong Ao told Yang Kai about these things, and since his time on Rainfall Star he had managed to collect all of them.

After all, although these materials were also rare and precious, Yang Kai had harvested a lot of herbs on the floating continent and later searched through Rainfall Star's Heng Luo Chamber of Commerce branch warehouse for the rest, so it hadn't been any trouble.

Zong Ao had said that it was best to reach the Origin Realm before attempting to refine the Profound Yin Sunflower Water because only with such cultivation could they withstand the pain from the refining process.

Yang Kai chose to start refining it in the Saint King Realm though, because of his self-confidence.

Whether it was in terms of physique, Soul, or Saint Qi, Yang Kai estimated that he was no worse than any ordinary Origin Returning Realm master, the only shortcoming he might have was being unable to comprehend Shi. On top of that though, his tenacity and endurance weren't comparable to an average cultivator's, otherwise, it would have been impossible for him to integrate Great Demon God's Unyielding Golden Skeleton into his body when he was so weak, or realize the profound Unyielding Will Martial Skill.

As such, Yang Kai wasn't worried about his cultivation being too low, his only consideration now was how to get the most benefits out of refining the Profound Yin Sunflower Water.

Zong Ao had said that this thing could greatly improve the cultivation of a cultivator without any harmful side-effects. Yang Kai felt that his current First-Order Saint King cultivation was too low, and if he could improve it quickly it would increase his safety and ability to survive.

He wasn't worried about damaging his foundation, state of mind, or comprehension of the Martial Dao and Heavenly Way.

His physique was abnormally strong, so even if his cultivation realm soared this time, it wouldn't cause him any physical harm or create any difficulties in his later cultivation. There was also no need to worry about his mental stability. After absorbing so many Soul remnants from various cultivators, Yang Kai's state of mind was no longer on the level of a Saint King Realm cultivator. Similarly, his understanding of the Heavenly Way and Martial Dao far exceeded others in his realm.

Now that everything was prepared, Yang Kai naturally wasn't going to delay any further.

Although he had carefully prepared everything beforehand, Yang Kai still inspected all the materials that were placed around him to make sure one last time there were no omissions before nodding lightly. After thinking about it, he also took out a few Golden Sun Fruits and set them down nearby.

He had obtained these Golden Sun Fruits together with Dai Yuan in the Flowing Flame Sand Field and each of them contained a large quantity of potent Yang Attribute energy, which would be perfectly suited for use at this time.

When everything was ready, Yang Kai's expression became solemn and he sent his Saint Qi into a nearby stone table. After this stone pier absorbed his Saint Qi, its surface flashed and the Spirit Array engraved in the room, which had been stopped for some time, began rumbling again.

After a while, pure Fire Attribute energy was drawn from the Earth Lung Fire Pond and poured into the spot where Yang Kai was sitting.

The fire and aura condensed into a tangible substance that immediately wrapped around Yang Kai, rushing into his body like a great flood in the next instant. Yang Kai's expression remained unchanged as he ignored the surge of pain he felt, not only not trying to resist, but instead opening all of his body's pores and allowing this fire aura easier access.

Soon, all of Yang Kai's clothes were reduced to ash, exposing his intrepid body and solid muscles. His skin was releasing a golden glow and its surface was beginning to crack, allowing golden blood to flow out. These ruptures were quickly restored under the effects of the Golden Blood before cracking again, forming a cycle of destruction and repair.

Yang Kai stretched out his hand and a jade bottle which had been placed on the ground flew into it. Opening the bottle immediately, Yang Kai poured the crimson red pill inside it into his mouth before closing his eyes to refine its efficacies.

After an hour, the effects were fully absorbed and were filling every bit of Yang Kai's physique. He then took out a dark red spirit grass and stuffed it into his mouth.

Different pills, different herbs, and even the Golden Sun Fruits were ingested by Yang Kai one after another.

The entire process lasted for three days and three nights.

Each time he took one of these materials, the heat pulsing from Yang Kai's body increased in intensity, quickly reaching a point which would terrify any ordinary person.

Every strain of Yang Kai's muscles were spasming and his face had become terribly fierce, his eyes completely red as if he wanted to bite someone to death. Although his appearance was miserable, Yang

Kai's powerful Soul cultivation allowed him to maintain his sobriety, which at this point he couldn't tell if it was a blessing or a curse.

In this lucid state, Yang Kai could clearly feel the efficacies of the pills and herbs he had taken colliding and mixing in his meridians and physique, inducing some incredible changes as they did. It currently felt like millions of ants were rioting about inside his body, creating a kind of torment no Saint King Realm cultivator could possibly bear.

No wonder Zong Ao had repeatedly warned Yang Kai to not act hastily and try to refine the Profound Yin Sunflower Water before reaching the Origin Returning Realm. [That old guy really wasn't spouting nonsense.]

The pain he was experiencing right now would be too much for an ordinary Origin Returning Realm master, and this was just the beginning. If not for his Golden Blood's incredible restorative ability, at this moment he would have to give up, otherwise, if he continued, his body would literally explode.

All the pills and herbs Yang Kai used were either Yang or Fire Attribute, and coupled with the natural Fire Attribute energy of this place, his body had accumulated an unimaginable amount of burning power and was bearing torment difficult to imagine.

Yang Kai's eyes opened again, and with a wave of his trembling hand, sent his Saint Qi into a second stone table.

Hu...

With a low rumble, the Spirit Array in the stone chamber began operating faster, and the Fire Attribute energy being extracted from the Earth Lung Fire Pond increased exponentially.

This time, Yang Kai couldn't bear it anymore and had to release a series of miserable howls to help stabilize his mood.

Not daring to delay, Yang Kai pushed his Saint Qi fiercely to forcefully refine and fuse the various medicinal efficacies into every part of his physique.

It was only three days later that Yang Kai finished merging all the violent medicinal efficacies in his body and suppressed them into his meridians.

Immediately, with a dignified expression, Yang Kai took out a special bottle and stared at it for a moment before opening it resolutely and extracting a single drop of crystal-like liquid from it with a light jolt.

The moment this drop of liquid flew out, the stone chamber, which was akin to an extremely hot furnace, was suddenly filled with a deep chill.

It was obvious to the naked eye that the space surrounding this drop of liquid had been completely cleared of all burning aura, the dense Fire Attribute energy unable to even approach it closer than one metre. What was even stranger though was that after being extracted by Yang Kai, this drop of liquid simply floated mid-air in front of him.

Profound Yin Sunflower Water!

This was a treasure that could elicit greed from an Origin King Realm master and Yang Kai actually had twenty drops of it.

Seeing this drop of Profound Yin Sunflower Water, Yang Kai couldn't help thinking of that enchantress Xue Yue! At that time, that woman had deadly appeal to both men and women, and had been poisoned by this Profound Yin Sunflower Water. It had taken Yang Kai extraordinary effort to awaken her.

However, if it weren't for the fetters of the Soul Chains, Yang Kai wouldn't have cared about whether she had lived or died; after all, far from being friends, the two of them could be considered enemies.

When Yang Kai left Rainfall Star, he had also been chased down by people from Heng Luo Chamber of Commerce.

Slowly shaking his head to dispel these thoughts, Yang Kai no longer dallied and directly swallowed this drop of Profound Yin Sunflower Water.

A frigid sensation instantly spread from Yang Kai's mouth, not only showing signs of freezing his physical body but even his Knowledge Sea. At that moment, an extreme heat erupted from Yang Kai's body to swiftly dispel this icy cold chill.

But the energy contained in this drop of Profound Yin Sunflower Water was truly terrifying. As soon as the initial cold had been dispersed, an even stronger chill began diffusing through Yang Kai's body.

The next moment, endless scorching power burst out.

These two hot and cold forces took Yang Kai's body as a battlefield and collided with one another, neither of them dispersing the other but instead undergoing some profound and mysterious changes.

Yang Kai's solemn expression collapsed immediately and a series of muffled roars escaped from deep in his throat while veins bulged across his skin, giving him a terrifying appearance.

Ha Li Ka, President of Rainfall Star's Heng Lou Chamber of Commerce's branch and a peak Third-Order Origin Returning Realm master had been injured by this Profound Yin Sunflower Water and forced to cut off his own arm to save his life. If Yang Kai had not taken so many Yang and Fire Attribute pills and spirit herbs to accumulate a terrifying scorching power inside his body, this drop of Profound Yin Sunflower Water would have killed him the instant he swallowed it.

The first difficulty in refining Profound Yin Sunflower Water was to suppress enough burning power inside one's body. If one's physique wasn't strong enough and their Soul wasn't tough enough, it would be impossible for them to even temporarily store this kind of hot energy in their meridians, much less move on to the next step of the refining.

The second difficulty was the situation Yang Kai was enduring right now. He had to remain awake and alert to maximize the fusion of the hot and cold powers rampaging inside his body.

If he was unable to pass this hurdle, at best he would suffer crippling injuries, while at worse his body would be completely destroyed.

Inside the stone chamber, Yang Kai's bestial roars continued to resound and his condition was extremely difficult to even understand. Sometimes his whole body was cold like profound ice, the air around him

filled with frost and his skin a dark blue, then in the next moment, his skin would be red hot and releasing steam as if he was a cooked crab.

As he withstood this alternating extreme hot and cold, Yang Kai was pleasantly surprised to find that his cultivation was growing at a horrifying speed. Not only was his cultivation realm increasing, but the Demonic Flame in his body also seemed to be undergoing some subtle changes.

Yang Kai's Demonic Flames were themselves a strange coexistence of hot and cold forces. It was a unique Saint Qi that only belonged to him. The situation in his body created by refining the Profound Yin Sunflower Water actually mimicked the properties of the Demonic Flame perfectly and was gradually causing some changes in the Saint Qi in his body. Not only had Yang Kai not anticipated such a development, Zong Ao likely hadn't either.

Chapter 1243, Complete Refinement

In the fifth layer of the Flowing Flame Sand Field, inside a stone chamber at the bottom of an unoccupied Earth Lung Fire Pond, a pale Yang Kai sat calmly.

Although he was exhausted and about to collapse, Yang Kai's expression still had traces of joy and excitement mixed into it, and the Saint Qi fluctuations emanating from his body clearly indicated he had obtained a substantial improvement in his cultivation.

It had been more than a month since he began refining the Profound Yin Sunflower Water, but it was not until yesterday that he finally finished.

He hadn't expected that it would take such a long time and that there would be so many unexpected developments during the refining process.

The cold power contained in the Profound Yin Sunflower Water was far too powerful, and the spirit grasses and spirit medicines he had taken before, coupled with the Fire Attribute energy drawn in by the stone chamber's Spirit Array with two stone tables activated, still couldn't suppress it. As the hot and cold forces in his body became unbalanced, as a last resort, Yang Kai had activated the third stone table control to dramatically increase the amount of Fire Attribute energy being channelled into the stone room.

This attempt to balance the power of the Profound Yin Sunflower Water with the power of the Earth Lung Fire Pond had backfired though. When Yang Kai activated the third control table, the cold power of the Profound Yin Sunflower Water was completely suppressed, and the burning power began running rampant in his body.

Unable to back down, Yang Kai took a second drop of Profound Yin Sunflower Water but was aggrieved to discover that the initial imbalance appeared again.

In the end, Yang Kai had to activate all four of the stone tables allowing the Spirit Array to extract the maximum amount of Fire Attribute energy from the Earth Lung Fire Pond. Fortunately, this just barely managed to balance the cold and hot forces in his body.

However, doing this increased the risk and suffering Yang Kai had to endure exponentially, and during this past month, he had constantly wandered the line between life and death, nearly falling over its edge several times.

His strong body and powerful Soul played crucial roles at the critical moment. Yang Kai had to use his pure Golden Blood several times to repair his wounds, otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to survive and been killed by the rampant hot and cold energies.

Although it had been an incredibly dangerous and painful experience, the final result was actually quite different from Yang Kai's expectations.

Zong Ao had praised the Profound Yin Sunflower Water to Heavens so, naturally, Yang Kai believed it to be extremely powerful and was hoping to use this refining to directly break through to the Third-Order Saint King Realm and possibly even touch the threshold of the Origin Returning Realm, but currently, his cultivation was only Second-Order Saint King.

Two drops of Profound Yin Sunflower Water, so many rare spirit herbs, pills, and all the power of the Earth Lung Fire Pond, yet he had only broken through one Minor Realm.

Nevertheless, despite his cultivation not increasing much, Yang Kai had gained something else.

Pondering for a moment, Yang Kai opened his hand and a dark Demonic Flame appeared atop his palm like a burning fireball. The Demonic Flame looked the same as before, but it was no longer fluctuating between hot and cold, good and evil aura. Anyone who swept it with their Divine Sense would not just think it was a strange, somewhat malevolent looking ball of fire, without even any kind of temperature.

However, with a single thought, Yang Kai transformed this indistinct Demonic Flame into one that emitted a bitter cold aura. With a crackling, the entire stone room filled with frost. The walls of this massive room also began to freeze over with seemingly everlasting ice, causing the protective Spirit Arrays to activate automatically and resist this spreading chill.

Yang Kai's thoughts changed again, and the icy chill instantly disappeared and was replaced by a blistering heat. The frost that had diffused before disappeared in the blink of an eye and a raging inferno took its place. The protective Spirit Arrays in this stone room couldn't respond to this dramatic change fast enough and many cracking sounds rang out.

Yang Kai showed a look of satisfaction as he gently clenched his fists, causing the black ball of Demonic Flame to disappear.

He also noticed that after refining two drops of Profound Yin Sunflower Water, the main reason why his cultivation didn't improve too dramatically was that his Demonic Flame had absorbed most of the energy.

When the Profound Yin Sunflower Water and the various hot forces reached a balance in his body, logically speaking, these two conflicting forces should have led to massive growth in his cultivation, but the strange Demonic Flame, which itself was an amalgamation of hot and cold energy was actually able to accept the efficacies of the Profound Yin Sunflower Water and the Fire Attribute energy to strengthen itself.

The Demonic Flame only recently came into existence, and up until a month ago, it had been a coexistence of cold and hot energy. Although this simultaneously hot and cold energy was unpredictable and incomprehensible, Yang Kai was unable to manipulate its state at all.

But now, Yang Kai could achieve fine control of its properties. The power of his Demonic Flame had greatly improved and his ability to manipulate it had also increased dramatically.

In the future, when Yang Kai faced enemies, if he wanted his Saint Qi to be cold it would be cold, then if he wanted it to be hot it would be hot. This ability to control the properties of his Demonic Flame provided a greater boost in combat efficiency than a simple increase in his own power.

Overall, Yang Kai was very satisfied with this refining. From the moment the Demonic Flame came into existence, Yang Kai knew that this exotic power had great growth potential.

Unfortunately, he hadn't been able to figure out how to enhance his Demonic Flame and there was no one who could help guide him.

This opportunity was a coincidence that allowed him to find a way forward.

As long as he could create a balance of hot and cold energies, Yang Kai could allow his Demonic Flame to absorb them and promote its growth.

It seemed that the remaining Profound Yin Sunflower Water wasn't useless after all, Yang Kai thought secretly.

He was still thinking about what he was going to do with so many Profound Yin Sunflower Water drops. Selling them wasn't an option. Everyone would know he had such a treasure and there would be no end in troubles. But allowing the Profound Yin Sunflower Water to simply collect dust would be nothing short of wasting Heaven's precious gifts.

Now, Yang Kai had a plan.

As long as he could collect a large number of Yang and Fire Attribute herbs, he could refine the Profound Yin Sunflower Water two or three more times to further strengthen his Demonic Flame.

Of course, this was all just an idea, and Yang Kai didn't even know whether he could realize it.

If not for the fact that time was running out, Yang Kai would be willing to refine some more Profound Yin Sunflower Water here to experiment. Unfortunately, more than five months had passed since he first entered the Flowing Flame Sand Field, so there wasn't much time left until the six-month deadline. He could only put this idea on hold for a while and try to verify it later.

Yang Kai was afraid that he would never again find such a good refining environment like the Earth Lung Fire Pond here; after all, the next time the Flowing Flame Sand Field opened would likely be hundreds of years from now.

After sitting in meditation for a day, Yang Kai had fully restored himself, got up, walked around the room to collect the four soft glowing orbs embedded in the walls, and tossed them into his Space Ring.

These light orbs were not ordinary objects, so Yang Kai planned to take them back and place them around his residence. Not only could these things calm one's mood, but they could also optimize one's environment, so he didn't plan on leaving them behind.

After making sure that he had thoroughly cleaned out anything of value in the stone chamber, Yang Kai left and walked down the long tunnel.

Soon, Yang Kai walked out of the passage and stood at the entrance to the cave. Staring out this entrance, his lips couldn't help curling into a grin.

More than a month ago, he had suffered a big loss to that Artifact Spirit, and if he hadn't cultivated Space Force, he would have died on the spot. Now that his cultivation had risen a Minor Realm and he had obtained the ability to manipulate his Demonic Flame's temperature, he definitely planned on settling the score.

If Yang Kai said he wasn't interested in owning an Artifact Refining Furnace with an Artifact Spirit, it would be a lie. If possible, he would naturally want to subdue the other party.

But that Artifact Spirit was not an existence to be taken lightly. Even if Yang Kai was more confident now, he knew that it wouldn't be easy to defeat it. On top of that, he needed to obtain victory swiftly because he had no idea when the Flowing Flame Sand Field would close. It wouldn't be good if he was heavily engaged with that Artifact Spirit then suddenly transported outside the Flowing Flame Sand Field by the World Principles here.

After hesitating for a moment, Yang Kai's figure flickered as he rushed directly towards the other cave.

In mid-air, the extreme heat from the Earth Lung Fire Pond below wrapped around Yang Kai and the tangible Fire Attribute energy tried to incinerate his body. Yang Kai immediately condensed a layer of Demonic Flame around his body that emitted a profound chill, and although resisting the ambient heat couldn't be considered easy, it was also not particularly difficult.

Yang Kai smiled happily as he realized that his Demonic Flame had truly become more powerful. The last time he rushed through the Earth Lung Fire Pond, he had to act extremely carefully, but now he could traverse it with just a bit of effort.

In the blink of an eye, Yang Kai arrived at the left cave and stepped inside.

The several-thousand-metre-long passage was quickly crossed by Yang Kai and from beginning to end, the Artifact Spirit was completely unresponsive, but when Yang Kai's figure appeared in the stone room again, the Artifact Refining Furnace in the middle of the chamber suddenly began humming though and its surface glowed bright red. In the next instant, the Scarlet Firebird let out a piercing cry and its lithe body leapt off the surface of the furnace.

The temperature of the entire stone chamber rose sharply, and the air took on a red hue.

This Artifact Spirit was obviously bearing a grudge. The last time it had allowed Yang Kai to escape, which had been frustrating it for the past month, but now that it saw Yang Kai appearing before it again, it immediately felt like it was being provoked and was preparing to teach this impudent human a lesson.

This was also in line with Yang Kai's intentions. His muscles tightened and the ice-cold Demonic Flame layer around his body welled up to resist his opponent's hot aura. Waving his hand, Yang Kai condensed a Heaven Punishing Spear and hurled it towards the Scarlet Firebird.

The Scarlet Firebird screamed in anger, seemingly annoyed that it was being underestimated, releasing a large swath of fire from its beak that it sent towards Yang Kai.

Yang Kai sneered, not showing any intention to dodge. His Heaven Punishing Spear swiftly broke through the wave of flames while transforming into a black dragon. Opening its mouth, this black dragon spat out a jet of ice-cold black flame, resisting the burning hot aura before it.

After several battles, Yang Kai had gained some experience with his Yuan Control Mastery and could now easily manipulate his Saint Qi and transform it into various kinds of attacks.

Yang Kai had to admit that obtaining enlightenment about Yuan Control Mastery with the help of the Red Candle Fruit was extremely helpful in battle. This alone improved his combat power by at least twenty percent.

Chapter 1244, Removing Firewood From Under The Pot

Yuan Control Mastery was an excellent method, but it put a significant load on one's Divine Sense, so not every cultivator could comprehend it or use it, only those with more powerful Souls could become proficient in it.

The transformation of the Heaven Punishing Spear clearly surprised the Firebird and seeing the cold flames from the black dragon withstand its heatwave clearly enraged it. With a flap of its wings, it released a barrage of flames that quickly bypassed the black dragon and struck towards the place where Yang Kai stood.

Wind and thunder force surged behind Yang Kai and a pair of delicate transparent wings manifested. With a flicker of these wings, Yang Kai's figure disappeared, causing the barrage of flames to hit nothing but air.

Without waiting for the Firebird to launch another attack, Yang Kai released a dozen Space Blades!

Since he was planning to fight a quick and decisive battle, Yang Kai naturally had no intention of probing his enemy and immediately used his trump card.

His Space Blade, which was capable of devouring almost anything, flew out quickly and elicited a look of dread from the human-like eyes of the Firebird. Last time, it had suffered a small loss at the hands of Yang Kai's Space Blade, and understanding the strangeness of this attack, it naturally didn't try to face it head-on, beating its wings quickly as it transformed into a streak of light and dodged to the side. Before it could completely rematerialize though, Yang Kai rapidly approached and sent a punch out towards it.

With his cold flames protecting his body, Yang Kai no longer feared the burning heat of the Artifact Spirit; after all, this Artifact Spirit had been born as a result of an accumulation of Fire Attribute energy from the Earth Lung Fire Pond over a few tens of thousands of years. Since Yang Kai didn't fear its source, naturally he didn't fear it either.

The Artifact Spirit's response was also extremely quick. Seemingly aware that its situation wasn't good, it quickly solidified the air, stopping Yang Kai's fist in place only half a meter away from it.

The Artifact Spirit had used its supreme mastery of Fire Attribute principles to display a Shi-like power again.

Pa pa pa...

There was a burst of explosions in the air, and the intensity of the Fire Attribute aura in the stone chamber instantly rose several levels. Yang Kai instantly pushed his Saint Qi to its maximum, releasing a frigid aura from his body that quickly broke through the imprisonment of the Artifact Spirit and restored his freedom.

The last time he was bound by the Artifact Spirit's power, Yang Kai had to use his Space Force to cut it off, but this time, just using his cold flames was enough. The reason for this was obviously because the cold energy conflicted greatly with the Fire Attribute principles the Firebird used to immobilize him.

Grinning, Yang Kai flicked his wrist, and before the Firebird could fully manifest its body, a black spear blasted towards it.

The Artifact Spirit's body had just fully appeared when it was penetrated by the black spear, causing it to release a piercing cry. Its two small eyes immediately filled with anger and panic. It seemed to not understand why, after disappearing for only just over a month, this human it was easily able to defeat suddenly had the ability to fight with it on even ground.

This Artifact Spirit didn't have a physical body so even if it was penetrated by a Heaven Punishing Spear, its life wasn't in any danger, but the ice-cold energy contained in this Heaven Punishing Spear made the Artifact Spirit quite uncomfortable and also caused its figure to fluctuate. Only after wriggling about for a while did it finally manage to restore its original appearance.

Yang Kai's move completely angered the Artifact Spirit. With its body shaking, it condensed a large number of feathers out of pure fire aura and shot them towards Yang Kai.

Yang Kai's leisurely expression instantly became serious as he realized the horrifying killing power behind these flame feathers. He didn't dare to hesitate. Condensing numerous Grand Heavenly Shields, Yang Kai also summoned a dozen peaks from the Hundred Mountains Picture to protect himself.

With a thunderous boom, the Grand Heavenly Shields were all crushed and the phantom peaks from the Hundred Mountains Picture were also severely damaged, disappearing in the next instant. Yang Kai hurriedly took back the Hundred Mountains Picture and then used his Wind and Thunder Wings to boost up his speed to evade.

The stone room shook violently under this impact and the surrounding protective Spirit Arrays once again activated, preventing the chamber from being completely destroyed but still suffering significant damage under the bombardment of the flame feathers.

After releasing these flame feathers, the Artifact Spirit's body shrank and its expression looked a little tired.

Obviously, these flame feathers weren't an ordinary attack and had most likely been condensed from the Artifact Spirit's very essence.

The flame feathers which had missed their mark, however, didn't disappear and instead changed direction and chased after Yang Kai like dazzling crimson daggers, clearly wanting to ruthlessly pierce him through.

When Yang Kai realized he couldn't escape, a dignified look appeared on his face and he abruptly came to a halt, turned around, and silently stared at the flame feathers rushing towards him.

When these feathers closed to within ten meters of his position, Yang Kai suddenly stretched out his hands, as if he was trying to grab the air itself, and then ripped them left and right like he was tearing something.

A large Void crack was torn open by Yang Kai, like the great maw of a beast, and welcomed the flame feathers.

Seeing this, Artifact Spirit cried out and the flame feathers nimbly returned to their owner.

Apparently, it also knew that it couldn't let its flame feathers enter this Void crack. Once inside, it would likely never be able to recall them. In the blink of an eye, all the remaining flame feathers had reintegrated into the Artifact Spirit's body, restoring it to its full size once more.

But at that moment, Yang Kai's figured flickered, reappearing close by and slamming his palm down. At the same time, in the air, a huge black palm print appeared, one which seemed capable of covering the entire world.

Heaven Covering Hand!

The Artifact Spirit couldn't evade this strike and, as its two small eyes stared at the giant palm print, it was forced to push the Fire Attribute energy in its body to in an attempt to forcefully withstand this blow.

In the next instant, the Heaven Covering Hand impacted the Artifact Spirit.

A deafening bang resounded as cold and hot forces collided inside the stone room, sending out intense shockwaves that caused the chamber to shake violently. The heatwave and black dragon which were still locked in combat not far away were struck by this shockwave and immediately scattered into light particles, disappearing from existence.

After everything calmed down again, the Artifact Spirit hovered in the air while Yang Kai stood several dozen meters away, staring at it coldly.

The Artifact Spirit's physical appearance didn't seem to have changed much, but its red glow was now obviously much dimmer than just now. Clearly it had suffered damage under Yang Kai's attacks a moment ago.

"I don't know what level your sentience has reached or if you can understand me, but if you are willing to surrender without a fight, I can spare your life. If you refuse, I can only act ruthlessly. If you choose the latter, you'll have to suffer a lot and it will likely result in severe damage to your foundation!" Yang Kai said faintly.

This Artifact Spirit had indeed achieved a high degree of sentience, but Yang Kai wasn't sure if it was capable of understanding his words; after all, this guy had been tethered to an Artifact Refining Furnace for tens of thousands of years and may not have ever interacted with other living things.

What surprised Yang Kai, however, was that after he had said this, rage flashed across the small eyes of the Artifact Spirit.

It really could understand him!

The next moment, an angry cry came from its mouth, and the Artifact Refining Furnace, which had been silently sitting in the centre of the stone room, buzzed loudly. The Artifact Refining Furnace then became red hot in an instant and a wave of heat suddenly shot out from it and poured into the Firebird's body.

The Artifact Spirit, which had originally been slightly injured, was supplemented by the furnace that gave birth to it and suddenly recovered, its body growing even larger than before as it hovered over-top Yang Kai's head, its wings spread out broadly, covering half of Yang Kai's vision.

As this was happening, Yang Kai just watched quietly, without any intention of interfering. Not only did he not attempt to stop the Artifact Spirit, a hint of pity flashed across his eyes.

In the end, an Artifact Spirit was just an Artifact Spirit. Although it had achieved sentience, its battle experience was far less than Yang Kai's.

Yang Kai was waiting for this moment.

After battling the Artifact Spirit last time, Yang Kai understood that this Artifact Refining Furnace was unusual, and relying on it, the Artifact Spirit could instantly supplement and strengthen itself. However, there was definitely a limit to this, and it was impossible for it to supplement the consumption of the Artifact Spirit endlessly.

Therefore, Yang Kai had fought violently at the beginning in an attempt to force the Artifact Spirit to use the reserves stored inside the Artifact Refining Furnace. If it hadn't resorted to using the Fire Attribute energy stored in the Artifact Refining Furnace, Yang Kai would have no way of carrying out the next part of his strategy.

Now that it was using the Artifact Refining Furnace though, how much Fire Attribute energy would still be left inside it? From the corner of Yang Kai's eyes, he secretly glanced towards the huge Origin King Grade furnace.

After its body became huge, the Artifact Spirit regained its proud expression and its small eyes filled with disdain.

However, before it could show off its power, Yang Kai disappeared from where he was standing and when his figure reappeared, it was already standing beside the furnace.

Immediately, under the horrified gaze of the Artifact Spirit, a ball of Demonic Flame emerged from Yang Kai's palm and shot fiercely towards the Artifact Refining Furnace.

In an instant, the Artifact Refining Furnace was wrapped in Demonic Flame, after which Yang Kai ferociously pushed his Saint Qi as he poured his strength into the furnace.

The ice-cold flames exerted their full power at this moment and in the blink of an eye, the massive Artifact Refining Furnace's surface began to freeze and frigid black energy continuously spread toward its interior.

Up above, the Artifact Spirit seemed to suffer severe damage, its massive red body suddenly trembling violently as a hue of cold, black light emerged from its figure.

It now knew what Yang Kai was trying to do.

The Artifact Refining Furnace was the vessel that gave birth to it. It was the Artifact Spirit of this Artifact Refining Furnace, so once the Artifact Refining Furnace received an attack or was damaged, there was no way it would remain unharmed.

It could be said that Yang Kai didn't need to confront it at all, he only needed to deal with the Artifact Refining Furnace. This was probably the greatest sadness of an Artifact Spirit. No matter how powerful an existence it was, it could never fully control or display its own strength.

The Artifact Spirit warped and distorted. Yang Kai's actions had made it enraged, but the chill that spread from inside its body also made it extremely frightened.

Not daring to hesitate, the Firebird opened its mouth and released a powerful heat blast to attack Yang Kai. It didn't expect this blow to kill Yang Kai, it only wanted to drive him away from the Artifact Refining Furnace so he could no longer attack its vessel.

Chapter 1245, Subduing

Yang Kai was also quick shocked at this moment. He discovered that this Artifact Refining Furnace contained an intense Fire Attribute energy that made freezing it quickly impossible.

Even as the heat blast struck towards him, Yang Kai didn't dare to move; after all, his intentions had been exposed. This Artifact Spirit's intelligence was quite high, so once he left the Artifact Refining Furnace, it would be extremely difficult to approach it again.

Staring at the blistering-hot blast, Yang Kai's expression became solemn as he stretched out his other hand and fiercely tore open a Void crack.

This Void crack was twice as large as the previous one Yang Kai had opened.

The heat blast arrived in front of Yang Kai at that moment and poured into The Void, becoming exiled forever and failing to bring any harm to Yang Kai at all.

However, the Void crack Yang Kai opened immediately began to destabilize. Although Yang Kai's understanding of the Dao of Space and his ability to manipulate Space Force had improved greatly, he was still a fair distance away from reaching the grand accomplishment stage. Forcibly ripping open a Void crack to confront an enemy was a measure of last resort. When this Void crack was struck by the pure fire aura contained in the heatwave fired by the Artifact Spirit, it instantly warped and appeared to be on the verge of collapsing.

Yang Kai's face sank. Leaving one hand on the Void crack, trying to maintain its stability and stalling for as much time as possible, he used his other hand to desperately pour his ice-cold Saint Qi into the Artifact Refining Furnace.

Like a dam had burst, Yang Kai's Saint Qi flooded out of his body, causing the black frost on the surface of the Artifact Refining Furnace to rapidly expand.

The Artifact Spirit could see that the Void crack Yang Kai opened was crumbling and a look of joy flashed across its small eyes; however, when it glanced over at Yang Kai desperately trying to seal the Artifact Refining Furnace in ice, panic once again filled its face and it poured even more energy into its heat blast.

It seemed to realize that after this battle, either it would be frozen or Yang Kai would be incinerated, so it held nothing back.

The battle in the stone chamber instantly reached a deadlock. As the heat blast continued pouring out from the Artifact Spirit's mouth, the surrounding space became extremely hot, but at the spot where Yang Kai stood, the unstable Void crack intercepted and devoured this blast. At the same time, crackling sounds came from the Artifact Refining Furnace behind Yang Kai as a layer of black ice gradually spread across its surface and cold energy seeped into its insides. Although this process wasn't fast, it wasn't slow either.

As time passed, the Void crack warped further and became more and more unstable.

Eventually, under the pressure of the Artifact Spirit's heat blast, the Void crack collapsed, exposing the figure of Yang Kai behind it.

Seeing this, the Artifact Spirit showed a look of pleasant surprise. Without the strange black crack that could devour its heat blast, it had full confidence to incinerate Yang Kai in one shot.

A cruel and violent light flashed across its eyes and the Artifact Spirit opened its mouth wider, concentrating an intense ball of red light that caused shocking waves of heat to spread across the shaking stone room.

Seeing that it was about to shoot this blast, the solemn look on Yang Kai's face suddenly morphed into a grin as it gave a faint glance towards the Artifact Spirit before letting out a hearty laugh.

Along with his laughter, there was a sudden cracking noise as the huge Artifact Refining Furnace became completely encased in a layer of ice that blocked even the slightest bit of aura from leaking out.

The moment this layer of ice finished forming, the Artifact Spirit acted as if it had been struck by lightning, its huge body seemingly losing all strength. As it fell from the sky, the mass of Fire Attribute energy it had condensed in its mouth exploded, causing a backlash that blasted apart its entire head.

However, this explosion didn't kill the Artifact Spirit since it did not possess a true physical body. It was inherently proficient in Fire Attribute principles, so such a backlash wasn't capable of taking its life.

Nevertheless, although it didn't lose its life, the Artifact Spirit's massive body quickly shrank down and, after landing, it had returned to its original size. On top of that, its newly reborn head was quite dim and it had difficulty standing up; obviously, it had been severely weakened.

It stood there silently, staring at Yang Kai with hatred and resentment, its two small eyes shifting back and forth, its thoughts at this moment a complete mystery.

Suddenly, it spread its wings and transformed into a streak of red light that rushed towards the Artifact Refining Furnace.

It wanted to return to the vessel it was born from.

Naturally, Yang Kai wasn't about to let it succeed. After carefully plotting against it and finally managing to obtain a decisive advantage over this Artifact Spirit, if he allowed it to return to the vessel, all his efforts would have been in vain.

Jet black Demonic Flames poured out from Yang Kai's body and swiftly gathered into fireballs that floated around him. Under the guidance of Yang Kai's Divine Sense, these strange black fireballs circled slowly as they released an astonishing cold aura.

Tracking the rushing red light with his eyes, Yang Kai flicked his wrist and sent out one of the ice-cold black fireballs to intercept it.

Whether it was because it hadn't yet recovered its strength or because its foundation had been damaged, the Artifact Spirit didn't even attempt to avoid this black fireball and was hit by it directly.

With a loud blast, alternating hot and cold impact waves spread out fiercely and the Artifact Spirit's body manifested once again, tumbling through the air before directly slamming into the stone walls, its red glow dimming significantly once more.

Struggling back up, the Artifact Spirit transformed into a red streak again and shot out.

Yang Kai coldly snorted and sent out another ball of cold flame.

Hong Hong Hong...

Inside the stone chamber, the Artifact Spirit suffered almost inhumane torture. Each time it was hit by the cold flames, its body dimmed, and after seven or eight times, it even began having difficulty maintaining its form. Its two wings had shortened dramatically, and its signature three long tail-feathers had also disappeared.

With its container frozen, and having suffered a severe battering, the once-mighty Artifact Spirit's mood became anxious as it lost all ability to fight back against Yang Kai, degenerating into a sandbag to be beaten.

However, this fellow was remarkably tough. It had been corroded many times by the cold flames but was still intact and its spirituality had not been lost. This secretly startled Yang Kai and also strengthened his idea of subduing it.

This time, if he had not successfully removed the firewood from under the pot by cutting off the Artifact Spirit from the Artifact Refining Furnace, with the strength and resilience this Firebird displayed, Yang Kai knew there would have been no way he could conquer it. But with its vessel now under Yang Kai's control, if he still couldn't subdue it, it would be too much of a waste.

After being easily knocked off again, the Artifact Spirit stood up tenaciously and let out a low, miserable sounding chirp from its mouth.

Yang Kai narrowed his eyes, his expression neither happy nor sad as he indifferently spoke, "Since you've achieved sentience, why don't we talk this over? I don't want to destroy you, and I'm willing to let you keep your life, but you must submit to me!"

The Artifact Spirit cried out repeatedly, its two small eyes glaring at Yang Kai angrily.

Yang Kai just chuckled, "You'd best think about it carefully. In any case, I don't need to subdue you, I can just destroy you here and erase your existence. It wasn't easy for you to be born, as for how long hard you needed to endure to do so, you understand far better than I do, so why not accept my proposal?"

"Naturally, submitting to me isn't necessarily a bad thing for you. As far as I know, Artifact Spirits like you should have strong growth potential. I'll bring you out of this place and will even find ways to help you grow." Yang Kai understood that hard and soft selling went hand in hand. When dealing with highly sentient races, a big stick and candied fruit was the surest way to succeed, let alone dealing with an Artifact Spirit.

Sure enough, the Artifact Spirit, which had been utterly opposed to the idea at first, heard Yang Kai's last words and its small eyes slowly began turning, seemingly thinking over the pros and cons of this deal while trying to evaluate if Yang Kai was just trying to deceive it.

Seeing a chance of success, Yang Kai struck while the iron was hot and said enticingly, "You've been stuck here for tens of thousands of years and the Earth Lung Fire Pond is the source of your birth, so presumably it can't help you grow any further. If you refuse to follow me, you'll be stuck here for who knows how long. The next time someone comes here though... heh, they may not be as accommodating as I."

After saying so, Yang Kai's voice sank, "I've made my offer, whether you submit or perish is up to you. Just know that I have little patience and time, so when I get up to leave here, if you haven't made a decision yet, you won't have another opportunity."

Saying so, Yang Kai sat down cross-legged down next to the Artifact Refining Furnace. After delivering such an ultimatum, Yang Kai believed this Artifact Spirit would make the smart choice, all he had to do now was wait.

The Artifact Spirit stood in the corner of the stone room, its eyes shifting back and forth between Yang Kai and the Artifact Refining Furnace which was sealed in black ice, its expression changing constantly as it weighed its options.

The stone room suddenly became quiet. Yang Kai didn't try to urge the Artifact Spirit further as he believed that after suffering so much and with the damage to its strength, it wouldn't dare try to overtake him again and would remain where it stood.

Half a day passed by before Yang Kai opened his eyes once more, glanced over at the Artifact Spirit coldly, and stood up.

This time, without waiting for Yang Kai to say anything, the Artifact Spirit let out a crisp cry.

Although Yang Kai couldn't tell what it meant exactly, he could still figure out its intentions and nodded, "I mean what I say. As long as you are willing to follow me, I will definitely help you grow and evolve. En, right, I forget to tell you, I have another companion like you that, after many years managed to obtain sentience, a Divine Tree, but right now it's in a deep sleep as it evolves. You'll be able to meet it in the future and communicate with it, and at that time you'll be able to know what kind of person I am."

The Artifact Spirit once again tweeted, but this time it had a docile tone to it.

Yang Kai grinned and said, "Good, since you're willing, let go of your Soul's defences so I can place a restriction on you. You can rest assured that this won't harm you, it's just a little method to protect against contingencies."

The Artifact Spirit hesitated for quite some time before finally releasing its Soul's defences.

Yang Kai immediately sent a burst of Spiritual Energy into its soul.

Chapter 1246, Departing

Great Heavenly Attraction from the Nine Heavens Divine Skills was a special Soul Skill that allowed one to take control of another's Soul Brand. Although the Nine Heavens Divine Skills were only a set of Martial Skills from Tong Xuan Realm, Yang Kai's Divine Sense was incredibly powerful so he didn't fear suffering backlash after using it on this Artifact Spirit.

Soon, everything was in order, and Yang Kai retrieved the Artifact Spirit's Soul Brand and sealed it inside his own Knowledge Sea.

This way, he could control the Artifact Spirit's life or death, and once it revealed any sign of treachery, Yang Kai could immediately terminate it.

After losing its Soul Brand, the Artifact Spirit wore an unhappy look, flapping its wings and crying out constantly towards Yang Kai. Yang Kai knew it was in a bad mood but he didn't care. Waving his hand, he melted the layer of ice surrounding the Artifact Refining Furnace. Now that he had subdued the Artifact Spirit, there was naturally no reason to continue freezing this furnace. Although freezing this Artifact Refining Furnace wouldn't deal any significant damage to the Artifact Spirit, it still had some impact.

Seeing that its vessel was no longer under threat, the Artifact Spirit's annoyance and anger dulled significantly, but it was still behaving a bit unruly.

Yang Kai thought about it for a moment before stretching out his finger and forcing out a drop of Golden Blood, turning to the Artifact Spirit and asking, "Do you want this?"

Last time, the Divine Tree had swallowed two drops of his Golden Blood and immediately fell into a deep slumber to evolve which it had yet to awaken from. His Golden Blood being helpful to the Divine Tree Yang Kai could understand; after all, each drop of Golden Blood contained a massive amount of vitality.

Whether it would be of interest to the Artifact Spirit though was uncertain. If it did though, it would definitely make things easier in the future.

To Yang Kai's surprise, the Golden Blood's rich vitality, which he thought wouldn't be of much use to the Artifact Spirit was apparently quite attractive to it. After seeing this drop of Golden Blood, the Artifact

Spirit's eyes lit up and it transformed into a streak of red light that immediately rushed over towards Yang Kai.

Yang Kai instinctively condensed his Saint Qi, but after realizing that the Artifact Spirit wasn't emitting any malicious intent, he relaxed his vigilance.

The stream of red light flew past Yang Kai's hands, taking the drop of Golden Blood along with it. A moment later, the Artifact Spirit reappeared nearby and its dim body which had clearly suffered much damage began restoring itself at a speed visible to the naked eye, soon after seemingly recovering quite significantly.

Yang Kai was stunned!

He had taken out a drop of Golden Blood because it was the most precious treasure he had on him that he was willing to part with. He had only done so as an experiment and hadn't expected it to really be of great help to the Artifact Spirit.

But thinking about it again, Yang Kai quickly understood. Although this Artifact Spirit didn't have a physical form and its vessel was an inanimate artifact, since it had obtained sentience, it couldn't be considered an ordinary Artifact Spirit. As long as the relationship between itself and its vessel could be severed and it could find a suitable body, it could become a true living being.

Since it could obtain true physical existence, of course the Golden Blood would have some effect on it.

However, after swallowing the drop of Golden Blood, the Artifact Spirit didn't experience much change and showed no signs of becoming stronger, only its foundation and essence recovering somewhat. At this point it tilted its head slightly to Yang Kai, putting on a flattering and begging expression, seemingly wanting to obtain another drop of Golden Blood from Yang Kai.

Yang Kai couldn't help laughing as he realized that the Artifact Spirit he had subdued this time had indeed achieved a high level of intelligence. However, this wasn't that surprising as this Artifact Spirit had existed for tens of thousands of years. If it hadn't, he wouldn't have struggled with it so much.

"I don't have any more Golden Blood, but I do have this," Yang Kai said as he took out a bean-sized Fire Crystal Stone and tossed it over.

His Golden Blood was too precious, so naturally, it was impossible for Yang Kai to satisfy the appetite of this Artifact Spirit, instead deciding to give it a Fire Crystal Stone he obtained from a Sixth-Order Fire Spirit Beast. Currently, Yang Kai's Space Ring contained many of these things so parting with one or two wasn't an issue.

When the Artifact Spirit saw the Fire Crystal Stone, it turned into a flare and wrapped up the crimson stone. When it re-materialized, the Fire Crystal Stone was gone.

Smacking its beak a few times, the Artifact Spirit seemed a little dissatisfied.

Anyone who had eaten a great delicacy and then ate some ordinary tea snacks would behave like this.

"Alright. That's enough for now. Go back to your container, I need to leave this place." Yang Kai wasn't going to give it any more benefits right now. He had yet to completely conquer this Artifact Spirit, and it

was only because he had control of its Soul Brand that it was obeying him, unlike the Divine Tree which Yang Kai wouldn't hesitate to help.

Listening to Yang Kai's instructions, the Artifact Spirit didn't immediately obey but instead let out a loud cry before turning into a ball of flame and circling around the four stone control tables inside the stone room.

Yang Kai frowned for a moment but quickly understood its meaning through his special connection with the Artifact Spirit, hesitantly asking, "You want me to activate the Spirit Array?"

The Artifact Spirit circled once more before floating down in front of him, seemingly indicating Yang Kai was right.

"Alright," Yang Kai didn't hesitate, reaching out and injecting his Saint Qi into the four stone tables and opening up the stone chamber's aura channelling Spirit Array to its maximum. In the next instant, a steady stream of pure Fire Attribute Energy from the Earth Lung Fire Pond was extracted and poured into the Artifact Refining Furnace.

The Artifact Spirit's figure flashed and it swiftly dove down into the ground, not explaining what it was trying to do.

Yang Kai wasn't worried it would run away though. Forget about the fact that he had its Soul Brand, its vessel was still here.

A moment later, Yang Kai's face changed and he stared intently towards the Artifact Refining Furnace. He didn't know what the Artifact Spirit had done but the pure Fire Attribute energy suddenly became several times fiercer, causing the various protective Spirit Arrays around the stone room to creak under the pressure.

All of the Fire Attribute energy was drawn into the Artifact Refining Furnace, causing it to shake unsteadily, as if it might explode at any time.

At the same time, ancient runes and energy chains began appearing on the surface of the furnace.

Yang Kai stared fixedly.

He had seen these energy chains once before, they were the shackles which had appeared a month ago when the Artifact Spirit had chased him out of the stone chamber. At that time, these energy chains had shattered and retrieved the Artifact Spirit's body, which had allowed Yang Kai to escape safely.

Now that they had appeared before his eyes again, Yang Kai immediately understood what was happening.

It turned out that this Artifact Refining Furnace had been locked in place in this stone room with a kind of powerful Spirit Array.

[Does this mean that this Artifact Spirit was born tens of thousands of years ago?] The original owner of this Artifact Refining Furnace locking it in place here must have been so that the Artifact Spirit didn't try to carry it out from this stone chamber. If this hadn't been done, with the Artifact Spirit's ability, it would certainly be able to bring the Artifact Refining Furnace out of this Earth Lung Fire Pond and not been trapped here all alone for tens of thousands of years.

After thinking about it, Yang Kai laughed bitterly. It seemed that if he wanted to take this Artifact Refining Furnace with him, he first had to destroy this Spirit Array.

The Artifact Spirit must not have the ability to unlock these chains, otherwise, it would have escaped from here long ago.

Yang Kai silently grumbled that he hadn't gotten any help from this Artifact Spirit yet and was instead being put to work for it.

A red light flashed from the ground and the Artifact Spirit appeared again, screeching at the chains binding the Artifact Refining Furnace. Yang Kai knew what it wanted to say and didn't hesitate to use his cold flames to bombard these energy chains.

Although this Spirit Array was exquisitely arranged and was also quite solid, in the end, it was just an inanimate formation.

Half a day later, the energy chains finally broke apart under the constant hammering of Yang Kai's black flames.

Seeing this, the Artifact Spirit, who had been standing beside him, let out a cry filled with infinite joy before plunging into the Artifact Refining Furnace.

The vessel and the Artifact Spirit merged into one at this time and the intense fire aura it radiated made Yang Kai pale.

Only now did he understand that because of these energy chains, the Artifact Spirit had been unable to display its full strength. If it had, who won and who lost in their last fight might have been different.

Fortunately, this restriction had given him an opportunity to subdue the Artifact Spirit. At this point, Yang Kai said a silent thanks to the original owner of this Artifact Refining Furnace.

Just as he was getting over his initial surprise, Yang Kai watched the massive Artifact Refining Furnace slowly lift up into the air before rapidly revolving and shrinking down.

Soon, the huge Artifact Refining Furnace became small enough to fit in the palm of Yang Kai's hand.

A light flashed and the Artifact Refining Furnace flew to Yang Kai. Then, from the furnace, a crimson-red figure shot out.

Yang Kai took a soft breath before taking the small furnace in front of him and putting it into his Space Ring.

He did not put the Artifact Refining Furnace into his Black Book Space because there were too many precious things inside it. This Artifact Spirit didn't look like an obedient fellow so if Yang Kai admitted it into his Black Book Space, he couldn't be sure if it would stay away from his valuables.

After receiving the Artifact Refining Furnace, Yang Kai also took down the eight light orbs embedded in the stone wall and threw them into his Space Ring before leaving the stone room.

There was no need to remain here anymore. Every stone room in this Earth Lung Fire Pond had been cleaned out by Yang Kai and everything of value now belonged to him.

It would be a waste of time to stay any longer.

Soon, Yang Kai came to the entrance of the cave and looked up, barely able to see the top of the pit.

He was a few thousand metres down from the surface and the molten lava in the Earth Lung Fire Pond would erupt from time to time, so it would be a bit troublesome and possibly dangerous to climb all the way back up.

After thinking about it though, Yang Kai's eyes lit up and he took out the Artifact Refining Furnace again.

He remembered that the Artifact Spirit was able to fly just now, and although it had only been flying around the stone room, that should mean it wasn't bound by the unique World Principles of this place.

After some communication, Yang Kai was overjoyed to learn the Artifact Spirit could fly out directly, so he no longer hesitated and had it carry him out.

A moment later, somewhere amidst the fifth layer of the Flowing Flame Sand Field, a red light burst from the ground, and below this red light was Yang Kai with his hand covered in ice-cold black flame, grasping the Artifact Spirit's claws.

As soon as it rushed out of the Earth Lung Fire Pond, the Artifact Spirit let out a loud, piercing cry, as if it had just gained a new life, spreading its wings and soaring up into the sky.

But a moment later, after reaching a height of ten metres or so, the Artifact Spirit came to an abrupt halt, staggered, fell to the ground, and face-planted.

Yang Kai saw this and immediately understood that the Artifact Spirit wasn't free from this place's World Principle restrictions, but was only less affected by them, allowing it to fly, just not very high.

Chapter 1247, Sixth Layer

Yang Kai wanted to take the Artifact Spirit back into his Space Ring, but after it finally gained its freedom, it was unwilling to be restrained any more. Instead, it transformed into a miniature Firebird and stood on Yang Kai's shoulder, using its pointed beak to comb his hair, putting on a determined display of flattery. No matter how Yang Kai tried to persuade it, it refused to return to the Artifact Refining Furnace.

Yang Kai didn't want to waste time arguing with it so he simply let it be. He couldn't put the Artifact Refining Furnace into his Space Ring though, otherwise, the Artifact Spirit would be forced to return to its vessel, so instead, Yang Kai stored it into his sleeve before slowly taking a look at his surroundings.

The fifth layer was still the same as it was a month ago, visible waves of heat and unbearable fire poison everywhere with dark reddish hues as far as the eye could see.

However, Yang Kai found that it was now much easier for him to resist the harsh environment here.

His strength had increased, and his cultivation had improved by a Minor Realm, but the biggest reason Yang Kai was able to resist the environment here was that his control over his Demonic Flame had grown remarkably.

More than a month ago, Yang Kai was unable to manipulate the properties of his Demonic Flame, so although it was both dense and potent, using it to resist the environment of the fifth layer was quite laborious. Today though, Yang Kai could determine whether his Demonic Flame was hot or cold, transforming it with a single thought. With the ice-cold flames protecting his body, he was no longer afraid of the fierce heatwaves and fire poison around him and was able to keep all of it at least half a metre away from himself.

Standing in place, Yang Kai pondered for a while, but after understanding what was happening, he couldn't help feeling jubilant.

Moreover, his worries about time seemed to be unnecessary. Even after refining the Profound Yin Sunflower Water, the Flowing Flame Sand Field hadn't closed. Calculating it though, the closing should be within a few days.

With several days of time left, Yang Kai naturally had no interest in returning to the fourth layer and instead wanted to continue deeper to see if there really was a sixth layer!

If there was, he wondered what kind of scene it would be.

If the power of his Demonic Flame hadn't improved so dramatically, Yang Kai would definitely not try to reach the sixth layer. Before, when he came here, it had been impossible for him to continue forward, but now that he had his ice-cold flames to guard his body, Yang Kai was confident he could explore further.

No one had explored past the Flowing Flame Sand Field's third layer barrier for tens of thousands of years, and each subsequent layer had been filled with amazing wealth and opportunities.

The Red Candle Fruit had appeared in the third layer, and the huge ancient Sect ruin had appeared in the fourth layer. Unfortunately, Yang Kai didn't have the ability to access that Sect ruin so he could only stare at it from afar and sigh. The fifth layer had an Earth Lung Fire Pond as well as an Origin King Grade Artifact Refining Furnace that had formed an Artifact Spirit. If there really was a sixth layer, there would no doubt be some good things there.

Making up his mind, Yang Kai no longer hesitated. Time was precious now as the Flowing Flame Sand Field would soon close. Taking out his Yuan Magnetic Compass from his Space Ring, Yang Kai determined his direction before setting off.

With his cold flames protecting him, it was truly quite easy for Yang Kai to walk through the fifth layer, and the excessive consumption of Saint Qi he experienced before did not happen again.

Yang Kai also constantly used his Demon Eye of Annihilation to avoid invisible barriers and dangerous Spirit Arrays.

Along the way, Yang Kai didn't encounter any danger at all though, and even the Artifact Spirit remained docile, only occasionally flying out for a moment before quickly returning and squatting on Yang Kai's shoulder.

It seemed that it also knew that this place had its hazards so it didn't dare run about freely.

For three days, Yang Kai walked through the fifth layer. If it weren't for the Yuan Magnetic Compass though, he would have quickly become lost in this scorching world.

On this day, while Yang Kai was walking, the Artifact Spirit crouched on his shoulders suddenly stood up and let out a series of rapid cries, its two small eyes staring forward with extreme alert.

Yang Kai was surprised by this development and quickly stopped before using his Demon Eye of Annihilation to sweep the area. However, upon not discovering anything wrong, his expression couldn't help but sink.

He knew that in the Flowing Flame Sand Field, there were some Spirit Arrays which were arranged so exquisitely that even his Demon Eye of Annihilation couldn't see through them. Now, it seems he was in front of one such Spirit Array.

However, this Spirit Array was actually first discovered by the Artifact Spirit, which came as a surprise to Yang Kai.

This Artifact Spirit was born from an Artifact Refining Furnace, so in theory, it shouldn't know much about barriers or Spirit Arrays, so how had it discovered something was wrong? Yang Kai turned his head and looked at it somewhat suspiciously, but the Artifact Spirit still kept tweeting, seemingly wanting to convey a warning to Yang Kai.

Yang Kai frowned, but after a moment, his expression suddenly dropped, "You mean, we're already inside the formation?"

The Artifact Spirit no longer spoke, its silence giving Yang Kai his answer.

"That can't be," Yang Kai's face changed. All along the way, he had been extremely cautious and never entered any place that seemed remotely dangerous. He only took routes that he thought were extremely safe, but if what the Artifact Spirit was saying was true, he had most likely stumbled into some kind of Spirit Array completely without knowing it.

Turning around, Yang Kai couldn't find anything special about his surroundings. This place was like any other, an extremely harsh dark red wasteland.

There wasn't even a dangerous aura in the air.

This might be a type of Bewildering Array or Illusion Array! Yang Kai didn't think the Artifact Spirit would be making such a fuss for no reason, so he could only think of such a possibility, but when had he fallen into this Spirit Array?

On top of that, if even the Demon Eye of Annihilation couldn't see any flaws in this Spirit Array, how was he supposed to escape from it?

If this was really the case, Yang Kai could only wait for the Flowing Flame Sand Field to close and allow the World Principles to teleport him out. Fortunately, that would happen within a few days, so Yang Kai wasn't particularly worried.

While preparing to sit down cross-legged and wait out the remaining time though, the Artifact Spirit on his shoulder suddenly let out a cry and transformed into a red streak of light that shot out towards a certain direction.

Yang Kai frowned but didn't force it to return because he was faintly aware that it had discovered something.

So he decided to wait and see.

What was strange though was the Artifact Spirit disappeared from Yang Kai's sight after about a thousand metres; however, from time to time he could still hear its cries and, judging from them, Yang Kai knew it hadn't gone far from his current position.

Yang Kai suddenly felt relieved.

A short time later, a fierce burst of Fire Attribute energy occurred and in the next instant, the entire world seemed to distort. After these distortions appeared, Yang Kai was able to see some flaws in this Spirit Array with his Demon Eye of Annihilation.

The Artifact Spirit hadn't been making a fuss for no reason, they really had stepped into an Illusion Array, but as for when that happened, Yang Kai didn't know. The various distortions around him were obviously not normal and were obviously the result of some kind of mirage.

As the Fire Attribute energy fluctuations became more and more violent, the distortions also became more obvious. The harsh surroundings began to crack and the earth and the sky took on the appearance of a broken mirror.

Not long after, with a loud cracking sound, the world around Yang Kai suddenly shattered and turned into scattered points of light.

At the same time, the harsh environment Yang Kai was standing in disappeared completely and was replaced by an extremely lush and beautiful landscape filled with rich World Energy aura.

Yang Kai couldn't help but gawk, subconsciously thinking that this might be another Illusion Array.

But when he looked back, his brow couldn't help furrowing.

About ten kilometres behind him there was a red light curtain beyond which a dark red scorched landscape filled with swirling fire auras lay.

That was clearly the fifth layer of the Flowing Flame Sand Field!

Thinking about it for a moment, Yang Kai suddenly had a thought.

Had he actually walked out of the fifth layer and arrived in the sixth layer?

The place where he was currently standing was the clearly the sixth layer he had hypothesized existed. Yang Kai could tell because the World Energy aura here was significantly richer than around the rolling mountains of the fourth layer's Sect ruin.

Yang Kai didn't know when he set foot into the sixth layer, but he surmised that the moment he did, he had been enveloped in the Illusion Array, making him believe he was still traversing the fifth layer.

The mirages around him having been dispelled indicated that the Illusion Array had been broken.

Yang Kai turned his head again and sure enough, a red flash of light was flying straight towards him. A moment later, the Artifact Spirit's body reappeared, but now it had a fist-sized, hexagonal crystal in its mouth.

At first glance, Yang Kai realized that this crystal was a bit abnormal, because he couldn't tell what colour it was. Saying it was completely pure and colourless seemed right, but saying that it was a brilliant purple or red also seemed appropriate, an incredibly strange phenomenon.

Just as he was preparing to probe this crystal more carefully, Yang Kai's heart suddenly clenched tightly as he witnessed a burst of black Qi erupt from it, transform into innumerable evil spirits, and rush towards him.

Yang Kai was shocked and quickly waved his hand to condense countless balls of Demonic Flame to intercept these terrifying spirits.

Strangely though, these evil spirits, which seemed so imposing actually shattered as easily as the moonlight reflected on a pond. The moment the Demonic Flames passed through this wave of spirits, they all howled miserably and disappeared. At the same time, a series of angry chirps sounded in Yang Kai's ear.

Yang Kai froze up and stared in front of himself only to see the Artifact Spirit still holding the strange crystal, its wings fluttering greatly as it flew about, constantly chirping as if yelling at Yang Kai.

Just now, Yang Kai suddenly attacking had startled it.

Yang Kai ignored the Firebird and instead knit his brow tightly.

He also noticed at this moment that the evil spirits from just now weren't real. In other words, everything had been an illusion, because when that swarm had appeared, his Demon Eye of Annihilation had allowed him to perceive their true form.

[Did this strange crystal have the ability to create such realistic illusions?] Yang Kai thought in surprise.

Chapter 1248, Ten Thousand Year Incense

Yang Kai's Soul was extremely powerful, so this crystal that could easily make him fall into an illusion was naturally not something ordinary and it most likely was related to the Illusion Array he had just now been trapped inside.

This thing may very well have been the Array Core of that Spirit Array. With the Artifact Spirit removing it from wherever it had been, the previous Illusion Array had been broken. The more Yang Kai thought about it, the more convinced he became and the greater his interest in this crystal grew. After steadying his mind, he once again began examining it.

However, this time, no black Qi poured out of it. Instead, Yang Kai felt as if his Knowledge Sea became unstable and great dizziness overcame him. For a moment, Yang Kai felt as if his body had become weightless and the Heavens and Earth had been inverted.

Startled, Yang Kai quickly took back his gaze and closed his eyes, taking quite a while to finally re-adjust himself.

No longer daring to spy on this strange crystal at will, Yang Kai beckoned to the Artifact Spirit, let it bring the crystal over, then tossed it into his Space Ring, planning on first going back before studying it further.

The Artifact Spirit saw that Yang Kai had finally returned to normal and no longer made a fuss, flying back and landing on Yang Kai's shoulder before combing its feathers elegantly.

Yang Kai began examining the sixth layer carefully.

Just a brief glance left him stunned.

This was because he found that this sixth stage was incredibly small, only a few dozen kilometres across. With the barrier to the fifth stage Flame Area surrounding it, Yang Kai was capable of seeing the entire sixth stage at a glance.

In this sixth stage, the World Energy was incredibly thick, and a few kilometres away from where Yang Kai was standing, there was a noticeable green bamboo forest. These bamboos were quite slender and swayed freely in the wind.

There seemed to be a loft of some sort in the very centre of this bamboo forest, one that must have existed for countless years but even now showed no signs of decay.

The entire sixth stage was wrapped around by the fifth stage, but it wasn't even slightly affected by the blistering heat.

Yang Kai stared at the green bamboo forest and the delicate loft fixedly.

Although he had encountered a huge Sect ruin in the fourth layer and realized that this Flowing Flame Sand Field was inhabited long ago, it was still a surprise for Yang Kai to find such a loft here.

The World Energy here was richer than at the site of that Sect ruin, so the loft which was built here was obviously not the home of someone ordinary. Most likely, it had belonged to a very high-level figure of that Sect.

What's more, this person was likely female, because the environment here was filled with a sense of elegance that male cultivators wouldn't care about.

Taking a deep breath, Yang Kai kept his Demon Eye of Annihilation open and slowly walked over to the loft.

Since he had already arrived here, he wouldn't hold himself back. Yang Kai wanted to see if there was anything good left inside this loft while also examining this green bamboo forest. Any bamboo that grew here must not be ordinary.

Originally, Yang Kai was worried that there would be barriers everywhere, with powerful Spirit Arrays hidden all over the place, but after easily walking a few laps around the green bamboo forest, he didn't encounter any such dangers, surprising him greatly. Was he just being paranoid?

Regardless, Yang Kai didn't dare drop his guard. Standing at the edge of the green bamboo forest, he condensed a Demonic Flame sword in his hand while staring at the thumb-or-so thick, several-metre tall bamboo in front of him, then chopped towards it.

Each of these bamboos was emerald green and gave off a powerful vitality, clearly indicating that they weren't just ordinary bamboo. All of these bamboos could be regarded as good material for Artifact Refining. There were at least several thousand bamboos in this forest so, naturally, Yang Kai planned on cutting some down and bringing them back for Yang Yan to refine some artifacts from.

After swinging his sword though, something unexpected happened. The place where the bamboo was chopped remained completely unharmed, without even a scratch.

Yang Kai saw this and was startled, quickly realizing that he had greatly underestimated these green bamboos, but at the same time he became overjoyed. Since these green bamboos were so tough, they would obviously be excellent Artifact Refining materials.

Thinking so, Yang Kai began chopping vigorously with his sword.

Half an hour later, Yang Kai stood with a dark look upon his face as he stared at the green bamboo in front of him.

During this half an hour, he had used almost all the means he could think of but still failed to cut down a single bamboo. Even after using a few dozen Space Blades, he had only left a tiny, almost negligible notch in it.

Judging from this rate of progress, it would be impossible for Yang Kai to cut down a single one of these green bamboos without spending at least ten days of effort.

How could Yang Kai waste so much time here? Staring at the bamboo in front of him for a moment, he let out a long sigh and gave up on cutting it down, instead turning and walking towards the loft.

Yang Kai was more interested in seeing if there were any gains to be had in this loft.

A moment later, Yang Kai arrived in front of this loft, but instead of rushing inside, he simply stood there and observed this several tens of thousands of year-old building.

It was indeed of a different construction style from current lofts, but these differences were quite minor. Yang Kai couldn't figure out what material it was constructed from, but it was extremely well preserved, the front door not even having any dust on it.

This loft had three stories, each one about five metres in height with a dome-shaped roof.

Yang Kai hesitated for a while, before turning to look at the Artifact Spirit standing on his shoulder. The Artifact Spirit was staring at the loft with its small pair of eyes, as if also interested to see what was inside, but upon noticing Yang Kai's vision land on it, it seeming felt a sense of crisis and its body quickly flickered and disappeared into the Artifact Refining Furnace in his sleeve.

[Damn useless bird!] Yang Kai cursed to himself. He had been planning on letting the Artifact Spirit scout out the situation, but how could he have known that this fellow would realize his intent and immediately hide in its vessel.

However, Yang Kai didn't intend on forcing it; after all, he had completely relied on it to escape the previous Illusion Array and gained the strange crystal with its help.

Shaking his head slowly, Yang Kai stepped forward, reached out, and slowly opened the door to the loft.

With a slight creak, the door opened.

Yang Kai wore a dignified look upon his face as he vigilantly condensed his Saint Qi.

But even when the door was completely opened, Yang Kai didn't feel the slightest sense of danger. Instead, there was a light, relaxing aroma wafting about this loft, one that seemed to refresh all his senses when he inhaled it.

Looking towards the source of this fragrance, Yang Kai knit his brow and walked over to discover a small incense burner.

This incense burner had a similar appearance to the shrunken Artifact Refining Furnace in his sleeve and its grade was clearly not low. It was sending out a vigorous aura that made it apparent it was an Origin King Grade Low-Rank artifact; however, from how it was refined, it was clear it had no combat power and was just a simple furnishing.

A trivial decoration was actually an Origin King Grade Low-Rank artifact. This loft was indeed amazing.

What surprised Yang Kai wasn't this small incense burner, but the thumb-sized piece of incense inside it. This purple sandalwood-like incense was clearly extraordinary, and the invisible scent wafting from it was equally so. Yang Kai couldn't detect the incense in the air, but from the aroma he smelled, he could tell it was very helpful to a cultivator's cultivation. It should allow any cultivator to quickly enter their most perfect meditative state.

"Ten Thousand Year Incense?" Yang Kai thought for a while before blurting out a name in excitement.

Although he hadn't recognized what this purple sandalwood incense was at first, after observing it for a while, Yang Kai was able to make an educated guess. If it really was Ten Thousand Year Incense, then it was an incredible treasure.

Ten Thousand Year Incense could literally burn for tens of thousands of years, and clearly this thumb-sized Ten Thousand Year Incense had been burning for such a length of time. Just from this fact alone, it was clear how incredible this it was, probably the highest grade of Ten Thousand Year Incense.

Ten Thousand Year Incense wasn't naturally generated, but rather something artificially refined. The raw materials required to refine it were astonishing, with parts of over a dozen species of Tenth-Order Monster Beast as the core ingredients. The rarest of all these materials was the heart of a beast called the Seven Coloured Elk.

The Seven Coloured Elk was an extinct ancient Monster Beast. It was born as an Eighth-Order Monster Beast and would grow to become a Tenth-Order as an adult. It was not only rare in quantity but also amazing in strength. The seven-coloured radiance it could emit from its body was capable of penetrating

any form of defence, so even if an Origin King Realm master were to meet a Seven Coloured Elk, they would have no choice but to give way.

If one wanted to kill a Seven Coloured Elk, they needed to gather at least five Second-Order Origin Kings.

After removing a Seven Coloured Elk's heart, one had to use it within ten days, otherwise, its aroma would completely dissipate.

It was for these reasons that Ten Thousand Year Incense was so rare. This thing not only had the effect Yang Kai originally perceived of helping a cultivator enter a perfect meditative state, inhaling it while cultivating also allowed a cultivator's chance of obtaining enlightenment and could also help clear their mind and eliminate heart demons.

When a cultivator broke through to a new Great Realm, not only would they require a certain degree of comprehension of the Heavenly Way and Martial Dao, they would also need to face any heart demons they possessed. These heart demons were usually pains or regrets a cultivator hid deep in their heart. While normally these heart demons could be suppressed, during a breakthrough, they would silently emerge and would often affect a cultivator's chance of breaking through.

It wasn't uncommon for a cultivator to die tragically or suffer crippling injuries under the influence of a heart demon.

Yang Kai hadn't encountered any heart demons during his cultivation because he didn't have many regrets or hidden pains. Only the separation from his beloved woman for so long made him feel some sorrow and guilt, but he also firmly believed that they would one day be reunited, so this didn't cause him any difficulties when breaking through.

However, there was no guarantee that he wouldn't one day take on such a heart demon, and once he tried to break through to the next Great Realm, the consequences would be dire.

Now that he had obtained such a piece of Ten Thousand Year Incense, this issue could be easily solved.

Yang Kai was able to recognize this Ten Thousand Year Incense because it was a product related to Alchemy, one that needed to be refined by an Alchemist.

Yang Kai was overjoyed, and quickly put this small incense burner and the piece of Ten Thousand Year Incense into his Space Ring, nodding with satisfaction as he did so. This Ten Thousand Year Incense alone was enough to make it worth venturing into this loft.

Chapter 1249, Second Star Emperor Token

When he raised his head again, Yang Kai suddenly found that there was a painting of a figure hung on the wall behind the incense burner. This painting only showed its subject's back, but it was clearly the profile of a woman. This woman had a slender, exquisite figure and was dressed in long white robes, like an inviolable goddess.

Yang Kai only glanced at this figure but couldn't help feeling a deep sense of reverence, immediately circulating his Secret Art to resist the impulse to kneel down.

Looking more closely, Yang Kai's brow furrowed.

He found that the back of the woman in this painting seemed vaguely familiar, as if he had seen her before somewhere.

Moreover, after dispelling the impulse to worship this woman, the picture suddenly appeared quite bland, as if it was an ordinary painting without any special features.

Shaking his head slightly, Yang Kai carefully checked the picture with his Divine Sense and determined that there was nothing out of the ordinary with it before taking back his vision.

He was certain that the woman in this picture was either the owner of this loft or had a strong connection with its owner, otherwise, a painting of her back wouldn't have appeared here.

Yang Kai didn't plan on taking this picture away though. He had obtained the Ten Thousand Year Incense, so he was already quite satisfied; there was no need for him to also take a picture of a stranger's back.

Looking around once more, Yang Kai found nothing else of note.

On the first floor of this loft, it seemed only the Ten Thousand Year Incense lit inside the incense burner and the strange picture existed.

Yang Kai quickly found a staircase leading to the second floor and proceeded up it.

After ascending the stairs, Yang Kai easily reached the second floor.

What he saw here though stunned him.

The second floor was actually a woman's boudoir. Although there wasn't much inside the room, Yang Kai could still infer from the furnishings that this was indeed where a woman lived.

One bed, one table, one chair, and a meditation mat atop the bed. Other than this, there was nothing else.

Glancing around the room, Yang Kai's eyes soon landed on the meditation mat. The owner of this loft apparently lived here, and this mat she used was not something ordinary.

Thinking so, Yang Kai stepped forward and reached out to pick up the mat.

But to his surprise, the moment his finger touched it, it disintegrated into a pile of dust.

It turns out it really was just an ordinary mat, one that was unable to withstand the erosion of so many years. Seeing this, Yang Kai gawked for a moment before suddenly letting out wry laughter. After gaining so many good things one after another, it seemed that he'd become a bit greedy, not even willing to let off someone else's meditation mat.

After searching the second floor for a while, Yang Kai determined that there was really nothing good here before turning around and walking over to the stairway to the third floor.

During his exploration of the Flowing Flame Sand Field, he had already achieved great results, and after experiencing the accident with the meditation mat just now, his mood had also calmed down greatly. Even if there was nothing on the third floor, he wouldn't care too much.

Thinking so, Yang Kai quickly ascended the stairs to the third floor.

To his surprise, there actually was something on this third floor.

Looking at it, it seemed to be some kind of token floating mid-air!

Yang Kai went stiff the moment he saw this token, quickly searching through his Black Book Space in the next instant.

After a moment, another token appeared in his hand. This token was almost identical to the one floating in front of him. Both tokens were made of some material that was neither metal nor wood and had no designs or embellishments. Only a large 'Emperor' character appeared on it.

From the token in his hand, Yang Kai felt a powerful coercion, one that made the heart of anyone who saw it race while simultaneously making one wish to prostrate themselves before it.

"Star Emperor Token!" Yang Kai's face became solemn as he instantly recognized this token.

Star Emperor Tokens were rumoured to have been created by the Starry Sky Emperor many aeons ago. Gui Zu once told Yang Kai that there were ten Star Emperor Tokens in total, but no one knew where all of them were. Additionally, each Star Emperor Token sealed a Divine Ability of the Starry Sky Emperor, and by using this Divine Ability, one could easily kill an Origin King Realm master.

The Star Emperor Token Yang Kai had on him was given to him by Gui Zu. Yang Kai had brought Gui Zu out from the floating continent, ending his two-thousand-year imprisonment there. At the time, Gui Zu had acted unpredictably, making no distinctions between good and evil, but at the last moment, for some reason Yang Kai still didn't comprehend, Gui Zu had actually given him this Star Emperor Token.

Perhaps it was Gui Zu's way of rewarding Yang Kai for saving his life.

At that time, Gui Zu told him that when he encountered true danger, he could infuse his Saint Qi into this token to use the Star Emperor's sealed Divine Ability.

Of course, even if he were to use the Star Emperor's Divine Ability to kill a powerful enemy, with Yang Kai's current cultivation, there was basically no chance he would survive the ensuing backlash; after all, the Divine Ability of the Star Emperor Token was far too powerful, once Yang Kai used it, it would quite possibly destroy him in the process.

Since obtaining this Star Emperor Token, Yang Kai had been hiding it in his Black Book Space, never intending on using it.

On the one hand, it was too dangerous to use. On the other hand, Yang Kai had yet to encounter a calamity he couldn't resolve, so there was no need to use it.

Yang Kai never imagined that in this loft in the sixth layer of the Flowing Flame Sand Field, he would find a second Star Emperor Token!

However, Yang Kai quickly found that something was wrong, because the Star Emperor Token suspended in mid-air in front of him didn't seem the same as the one in his hand. The aura coming from it, although majestic, didn't give off any feeling of danger.

Someone had used the Divine Ability sealed inside this Star Emperor Token! In other words, this token didn't have the Star Emperor's killing strike anymore.

Yang Kai figured this must be the case, but the fact that this Star Emperor Token hadn't been destroyed after it was used was also quite surprising to him.

No matter what, with a Star Emperor Token in front of him, Yang Kai obviously wasn't going to just ignore it. When he was about to reach out and take it though, a faint layer of light rippled from it.

Yang Kai's face changed when he noticed the murderous intent contained in this light halo and pushed his Saint Qi hard to retreat. However, although Yang Kai's speed was great, the light ripples were faster, and they quickly reached him.

Yang Kai face was ashen. Even if this Star Emperor Token had already been used, it seems it couldn't just be touched at will.

Just when Yang Kai thought he was doomed, the intact Star Emperor Token in his hand also released a faint light ripple that cancelled out the approaching one, causing both to disappear.

The second Star Emperor Token, which had been suspended in the middle of the third floor of the loft, seemed to lose its support and fell to the ground, making a clinking sound as it bounced a few times before coming to a stop.

Still quite frightened, Yang Kai clenched his own token tightly as cold sweat seeped from his forehead.

He hadn't expected such a change to happen. If he hadn't happened to be holding his own Star Emperor Token, he would at least have been heavily injured just now. The strange power that was contained in that faint light halo wasn't something he was currently capable of resisting.

After taking a moment to calm his breathing, Yang Kai walked forward slowly.

At this moment, the world suddenly seemed to shake, and Yang Kai felt that something in the surrounding space had changed. There was a faint repulsive force coming from all directions, seemingly rejecting his very presence.

At the same time, a slim, illusionary jade white hand appearing from the sky and seeming tried to grab Yang Kai.

This jade white hand clearly belonged to a woman, but it was surprisingly large, almost covering the entire floor, and it completely ignored the loft itself as it descended directly on top of Yang Kai's head.

Yang Kai's face changed greatly, instantaneously understanding that it was time for the Flowing Flame Sand Field to close, which was why the surrounding space had become turbulent.

Yang Kai figured that this scene was happening in front of all the cultivators still inside the Flowing Flame Sand Field. This jade white hand had clearly appeared to remove all of them from this place.

Yang Kai's conjecture wasn't wrong. From the first layer to the fourth layer of the Flowing Flame Sand Field, the same illusionary jade white hand reached out from the void and easily scooped up all the cultivators who were resting, walking, or even fighting, transforming into a brilliant flash of light that soon disappeared together with the cultivators.

The next moment, outside the Flowing Flame Sand Field, figures strangely appeared and the Elders of the major Sects who had been waiting outside joyfully went forward to meet them.

On the third floor of the loft, Yang Kai fiercely pushed his Saint Qi and sent out his own palm to meet this jade white hand.

Naturally, though, his Heaven Covering Hand failed to even stall this illusionary jade white hand. Yang Kai raced forward at that instant, sending out a dozen Space Blades to block this jade white hand for just a moment.

Taking advantage of this hard-won time, Yang Kai quickly grabbed the Star Emperor Token on the ground before calmly standing in place, not intending to resist any further.

However, when the jade white hand grabbed Yang Kai, and space around him began to distort and teleport him out, the two Star Emperor Tokens in his hand glowed, forming a light blue protective cover.

The jade white hand disappeared, but Yang Kai was still standing in the third floor of the loft with a confused look on his face.

Soon, the distorted space returned to normal and even the feeling of rejection disappeared.

It was as if Yang Kai had been forgotten as he stood there alone.

It took him a while to react, but when he did, a happy smile appeared on his face.

Yang Kai was certain that the phenomenon just now was a signal that the Flowing Flame Sand Field had closed, and that the teleportation power just now had somehow been blocked by the two Star Emperor Tokens, meaning he was now the only one left here.

He was happy that he now had a lot more time to use, but what worried him was whether he would face any danger when trying to leave.

After all, when the Flowing Flame Sand Field opened, the danger of the Flame Areas was reduced many times, but now that it was closed, the Flame Areas would become certain death zones. If Yang Kai wanted to leave, he would have to pass through all six layers by himself.

However, there was no point considering such things now, it was a coincidence that he had been left behind so thinking about how to take advantage of the situation at hand was his first priority.

Yang Kai didn't dare take back the two Star Emperor Tokens as he had no idea what would happen if he did. For now, all he could do was store them in his sleeve.

Chapter 1250, Blood Fusion Pill

Inside the Flowing Flame Sand Field first layer Flame Area, Yang Kai took leisurely strides as a pale blue light halo radiating from his chest. This light halo dispelled all threats around him. Even the intense heat

and fire poison of the Flame Area was unable to penetrate it, making it possible for Yang Kai to remain safe here even without using Saint Qi to protect his body.

It has been more than half a year since the Flowing Flame Sand Field closed, and during this period, Yang Kai had spent most of his time in the sixth layer.

It wasn't that he was searching for treasures though, as he had already taken away everything of value from the loft.

The reason he stayed there was just to cut down a few of the green bamboos.

His original plan was to cut a handful of these bamboos and then leave, but they had turned out far more tenacious than he expected. Even using his Space Blade, it had taken him a full twenty days to cut down a thumb thick bamboo.

However, using his Space Blade for twenty days straight wasn't a waste of time, as Yang Kai quickly discovered that his mastery of the Space Blade had greatly improved, along with its power and stability.

Pleasantly surprised, Yang Kai no longer cared about how much time cutting these bamboos took.

For the next six months, Yang Kai had taken this bamboo forest as his training ground and fought against them with all his might. Still, after all that time, he only managed to cut down twenty bamboo stalks. If not for him worrying that delaying longer would worry Yang Yan and Wu Yi, Yang Kai wouldn't have minded staying longer though.

And so, one month ago, Yang Kai had set off towards the outside of the Flowing Flame Sand Field.

During this period, Yang Kai had kept the two Star Emperor Tokens on his person, not daring to store them away for a moment. After the Flowing Flame Sand Field completely closed, the dangers inside really increased dramatically. The second and fourth layer Treasure Areas didn't experience much change, but the third and fifth layer Flame Areas had their ambient heat and fire poison concentration increase ten-fold.

Yang Kai quickly concluded that even his cold black flames couldn't resist such scorching heat. Fortunately, the Star Emperor Tokens created a layer of protection that allowed him to travel about freely.

He didn't know why the Star Emperor Tokens could restrain the Flame Area environment, but Yang Kai vaguely felt that this Flowing Flame Sand Field should have something to do with the legendary Starry Sky Emperor. Otherwise, a second, used Star Emperor Token wouldn't have appeared in the loft in the sixth layer.

At this time, if someone were to enter this place, it would indeed be a death sentence, so it was no wonder that cultivators on Shadowed Star would only enter when the heat weakened and conditions became relatively safe.

Currently, not far in front of Yang Kai, there was a kind of dark red energy curtain that contained a sensational heat. Anyone who approached this energy curtain would undoubtedly be burnt to ash in a flash.

When Yang Kai saw this dark red energy curtain though, not only was he not frightened, his expressed filled with joy as he raced towards it, as if he didn't know how to write the word 'death'.

However, just as Yang Kai reached the energy curtain, it seemed to sense something and a gap split open, allowing him to pass through it with ease.

After Yang Kai passed through, this gap in the curtain closed.

Outside the red energy curtain, Yang Kai was greeted by a completely different scenery. Although the surrounding aura was still filled with heat and the ground at his feet was still dry and cracked, the overall view was much different from the Flame Area.

He had finally come out. The Flowing Flame Sand Field was truly enormous. Yang Kai had used his Wind and Thunder Wings continuously along the way, but it had still taken him an entire month to travel from the innermost to the outermost layer.

Yang Kai estimated that this Flowing Flame Sand Field was at least a couple hundred thousand kilometres in radius. No one ever knew just how big it was before because no one had ever gone deeper than the second layer, making it impossible to speculate.

(PewPewLazerGun: That must be because all cultivators suck at math...)

(Silavin: Thou cultivates Dao. Not thy pathetic Math. I like Math though)

As soon as he walked out, Yang Kai put the two Star Emperor Tokens he had kept in his chest pocket back into the Black Book Space.

In the next moment though, Yang Kai frowned as he didn't know where it was now. Although the Yuan Magnetic Compass could determine which direction he had to walk inside the Flowing Flame Sand Field. It only pointed towards its centre, meaning if one walked in the opposite direction it pointed they could leave.

As such, Yang Kai couldn't judge where he was using it anymore.

However, thinking that no matter what, he was somewhere on Shadowed Star, Yang Kai calmed down, but just as he was about to use his Divine Sense to explore his surroundings, his brow furrowed again as he glanced over in a certain direction.

Not far from where Yang Kai was standing, he saw a figure flying towards him, and when their eyes met, this stranger showed an expression of shock.

It had been six months since the closing of the Flowing Flame Sand Field and every big and small Sect had long ago departed, so this newcomer hadn't expected to encounter living people here.

But in the next instant, this man quickly waved his hand, as if he recognized Yang Kai.

Yang Kai was also extremely surprised.

If the other party recognized him, how could he not recognize them?

Although he didn't know the name of this guy, Yang Kai had indeed seen him once. It was back when the Flowing Flame Sand Field had just opened and Yang Kai first entered. The man who was flying over was actually the same one who had invited him to travel together back then.

At that time, two people had been transported inside nearby Yang Kai, one belonging to Shadow Moon Hall while the other was this cultivator.

Yang Kai had refused his invitation.

Seeing Yang Kai at this moment, this man showed a joyful look and immediately adjusted his heading to rush straight towards Yang Kai, but before he could approach, his expression changed greatly and he abruptly came to a halt.

Another figure quickly crossed this cultivator and stopped in front of him.

Immediately after, another figure appeared behind this man, these two clearly attempting to intercept this person.

The man's face couldn't help but sink and he glanced over at Yang Kai seemingly unintentionally, appearing like he wanted to say something but ultimately remaining silent.

The two newcomers saw they had successfully blocked this man and released sighs of relief. They also secretly used their Divine Senses to investigate Yang Kai but upon seeing he was just a Second-Order Saint King, neither of them paid him much mind.

The taller of the two cultivators chuckled as he looked at that man he had intercepted with clear malicious intent and said "Junior Brother Deng, I was wondering why you decided to run towards this Flowing Flame Sand Field. Turns out you had a helper here, but why would you think a mere Second-Order Saint King would be able to help you resist us?"

The other cultivator, who was wearing purple robes, sneered and added, "It seems that Junior Brother Deng Ning has been riding high lately and become somewhat muddled. Otherwise, why would he rush to such an out of the way place? There's no need for Senior Brother Ye to try to reason with him."

Deng Ning, who was caught in the middle of these two, wore a dull expression on his face and made no attempt to acknowledge or deny these two's speculations, instead just asking, "Ye Yang Rong, An Zhi, for a trivial Blood Fusion Pill, are you really willing to discard all our brotherly sentiments from the past and act so ruthlessly?"

The tall cultivator named Ye Yang Rong sneered, "Brotherhood? In Demon Blood Temple, such a thing is nothing but an illusion. Senior Brother here doesn't expect any such feelings from you either. As for the Blood Fusion Pill... Junior Brother Deng should understand his own situation. Hand over that pill and out of consideration for our relationship as 'brothers', I won't make things too difficult for you."

"Oh, really?" Deng Ning chuckled sarcastically, "Aren't you just afraid that I'll desperately fight back? Don't think that you two alone can easily kill me. Even if I die, I can still drag at least one of you down with me."

Hearing this, Ye Yang Rong and An Zhi's faces both sank, revealing a hint of hesitation, apparently knowing that Deng Ning's words weren't an empty threat.

An Zhi frowned and converged some of his murderous intent before attempting persuasion, “Junior Brother Deng, you obtained many good things inside the Flowing Flame Sand Field last time, and because of that harvest the Elders rewarded you with that Blood Fusion Pill, but as far as I know, that wasn’t all you obtained, was it? The Sect also allowed you free access to the skills and technique library and granted you a powerful artifact, so why make such a fuss over a mere pill? We don’t want any of your other treasures, as long as you hand over that pill, it will be enough. Senior Brother Ye and I can even each compensate you thirty thousand Saint Crystals for it.”

He thought that if he gave Deng Ning a way to de-escalate, the other party would compromise; after all, it wasn’t cost-effective to lose one’s life for a pill, but how could he have anticipated that after hearing this offer, Deng Ning would simply scoff, “Thirty thousand? As a Demon Blood Temple disciple could you be ignorant of the value of a Blood Fusion Pill? Do you think a mere thirty thousand Saint Crystals would be enough to make up for my loss? Don’t even think about it.”

An Zhi’s face went cold, and he was about to say something again but Deng Ning cut him off first, “Senior Brother An, don’t blame Junior Brother for not reminding you about just what kind of person Senior Brother Ye is. Everyone here knows there’s only one Blood Fusion Pill, so even if I handed it over to you, how are you going to decide who gets it? If you really believe whatever promises Senior Brother Ye gave you, I think your future is actually more worrying than mine.”

As soon as these words came out, An Zhi’s expression immediately became ugly. Of course he had thought about this, but he was now riding a tiger and could only join forces with Ye Yang Rong to snatch the Blood Fusion Pill first.

How to allocate it after grabbing it could be thought about later.

Seeing An Zhi’s expression change, Ye Yang Rong quickly called out, “Junior Brother An, don’t believe his words, you and I are allies now. Whoever grabs the Blood Fusion Pill is who it will belong to. If Senior Brother here happens to have better luck and obtains it, Senior Brother guarantees he will compensate you appropriately.”

Hearing this, An Zhi’s brow relaxed slightly as he forced out a smile and said, “If Junior Brother has better luck, he will do the same for Senior Brother.”

These two had clear ulterior motives, but at the moment they had still agreed to cooperate.

Seeing that his plan to sow discord among these two had failed, Deng Ning grumbled to himself before reaching out to his Space Ring and extracting a crimson pill containing the amazing Blood Qi from it.

“Blood Fusion Pill!” Upon seeing this pill, Ye Yang Rong and An Zhi both stared at it covetously, as if this pill was a superb treasure for them.