

## Starlit Path 47

### Chapter 47: Crafting the Realm of Immortality

Within the Preaching Platform, Lu sat alone, hand propping their chin, brows furrowed in deep thought. Wolong Ridge wasn't a name plucked from thin air—it was a carefully chosen location, within Lu's control, designated as the site for the first secret realm.

Beyond the vast plains outside Beiluo City lay a ridge resembling a divine dragon coiled upon the earth: Wolong Ridge. Roughly a hundred miles from the city, it was neither too close nor too far.

For Lu, constructing a secret realm was akin to designing a game dungeon—challenging but manageable. The key was establishing the rules. This first realm would mark the dawn of spiritual energy's resurgence, and it needed to leave the world in awe.

“Yuwen Xiu, the Emperor of Great Zhou, and Xiang Shaoyun, the Governor of Western County, wield immense power. They could mobilize armies. If they clash at the ridge, the secret realm's exploration might devolve into a battlefield, defeating its purpose as a conduit for enlightenment. Entry must be restricted to those who qualify...”

Atop the Preaching Platform, Lu rubbed slender fingers together, pondering. Their mind raced, anticipating potential issues. With a soul strength exceeding 20 points, Lu's thoughts were sharp and orderly, cutting through complexities with clarity.

A low hum resonated.

After a long pause, Lu stirred. “Activate Preaching Platform permissions... Begin secret realm construction.”

As their mind surged, spiritual energy rose like a breeze, swirling into a misty haze. Lu’s robes fluttered as they sat enshrined in the fog, radiating the aura of a true immortal. Eight-trigram runes materialized before them, aligning in a precise array. Lu’s hand glided over each rune, as if engraving them into their heart.

The scene shifted. Lu found themselves floating in a chaotic void where heaven, earth, and surroundings dissolved into nothingness. Frowning, they raised a hand, and twenty-seven runes swirled at their fingertips, arranging themselves in various patterns. Thanks to the Preaching Platform’s authority, the meaning of each rune combination imprinted itself in Lu’s mind. They could manipulate these runes effortlessly, sensing the potential to craft an entire world.

But creating a world was beyond their current abilities—their soul strength was too weak to bear such a cost.

In the chaotic void, Lu tapped the runes, sending them into the emptiness where they vanished. Lines began to weave before their eyes, forming the landscape of Wolong Ridge. As Lu gestured, the ridge expanded in their vision. They embedded runes into its core, hollowing out a vast chamber within the mountain.

How should the first secret realm manifest? This question had lingered since Lu first activated the Preaching Platform. Now, a decision crystallized: the realm would take the form of a tomb—an ancient Qi Refiner’s burial site, nonexistent in reality but brimming with spiritual energy and immortal cultivation techniques. These would be the “immortal fate.”

To balance accessibility, Lu avoided overly fantastical elements like ghosts or demons. In a low-martial world like Wuhuang Continent, setting the guardians too strong would doom explorers and undermine the realm's purpose. Instead, Lu tampered subtly with the Qi Refiner's corpse to pose a calculated challenge.

As the tomb took shape, Lu felt their soul strength draining rapidly. "The realm is built, but rules must be set..."

With limited soul strength, the realm's scope was modest, necessitating strict entry criteria. "Rule: Create ten Qi Tokens—five Heavenly Qi Tokens and five Earthly Qi Tokens. Only those holding a Heavenly or Earthly Qi Token may enter the secret realm."

Lu's mind pulsed, and a system prompt appeared: "Consume 5 soul strength points to establish secret realm rules?"

Crafting a single rule cost 5 soul strength points, a steep price when the entire realm's construction had only taken 6. Lu winced but confirmed, "Yes."

Five points vanished instantly. Before Lu, spiritual energy converged, weaving into ten palm-sized tokens—five white, inscribed with "Heaven," and five black, marked with "Earth."

"Rule: Set a guardian spiritual pressure outside the realm, equivalent to twenty-five times the pressure of one hundred wisps of spiritual energy."

Another 5 soul strength points were spent, leaving Lu with a mere 3 points. Dizziness crept in, but they shook it off. With a flick of their finger, the ten Qi Tokens shot into the void, disappearing.

“Secret realm construction complete. Initiating projection into reality.”

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**\*Boom!\***

In the dead of night, dense black clouds rolled across the sky, swallowing the moon’s radiant glow. The world plunged into darkness.

A hundred miles from Beiluo City, Wolong Ridge quaked violently. The narrow, lifeless ridge shuddered, rocks jittering as if the earth itself roared in fury. Deep within, night crows screeched, and birds scattered, their wings beating against the eerie night. A faint blue glow pulsed from the ridge, as if something momentous was brewing.

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Exiting the Preaching Platform, Lu opened their eyes, drenched in cold sweat. After catching their breath, they muttered, “No reward?”

Unlike when they created the All-Method Furnace modifier, no attribute rewards followed, leaving Lu slightly disappointed. They rubbed their temples, eyeing the system panel’s paltry 3 soul strength points.

On the bed lay five martial manuals: three Blood Movement Techniques—Earth Derivation Scripture, Zhongnan Sword Manual, and Righteous Blood Movement Technique—and two sword techniques, Sword Sect Flying Sword Art and Sword Flick. Gathering these had been no small feat. Blood Movement Techniques were rare, and Lu required high-grade ones to ensure the All-Method Furnace could transform them into spiritual cultivation methods. The Earth Derivation Scripture was a copy from Lu's father, Lu Changkong. The Zhongnan Sword Manual and sword techniques came from Jing Yue, offered in surrender. The Righteous Blood Movement Technique was extracted from defeated Confucian scholars.

With the five manuals ready, Lu wasted no time. Their mind sank, and the faint All-Method Furnace materialized in their palm.

“Consume 25 wisps of spiritual energy to refine and enhance the provided Blood Movement Techniques and martial techniques?” the system prompted.

Lu's gaze sharpened. “Yes.”

Twenty-five wisps of spiritual energy evaporated from the panel. The manuals on the bed stirred, their text leaping to life and flowing into the All-Method Furnace. As it churned, the palm-sized furnace seemed to blaze. After a long moment, silence returned.

“Refinement complete. Provided techniques enhanced to High Yellow Grade.”

Five glowing scrolls lay on the bed, radiating a faint spiritual aura. Lu's eyes lit up. As they reached for a scroll to inspect, another system prompt flashed.

“Side Quest 1: Refine five Blood Movement Techniques or martial techniques (Progress: 5/5, Complete).”

“Congratulations, Host, for completing Side Quest 1. Reward: 5 assignable attribute points, Chess Manual: Heavenly Strategy.”