LI GANG — INTELLECTUAL FEATS, ANALYSIS & ROMANTIC DIALOGUE

PART ONE: WORLD CONTEXT

Warrior Cultivation: Rank 1 – Rank 9

To become a Rank 1 Warrior, one must sense the spiritual essence in the body and circulate it through the meridians. Rank 2 requires cleansing the organs and strengthening them with spiritual essence. Rank 3 demands washing the nerves, cleansing the muscles, and hardening the bones. Rank 4 requires activating one's own Heavenly Core. Rank 5 involves compressing Spiritual Essence until it liquifies. Rank 6 requires solidifying the liquified Spiritual Essence.

Warrior Divisions and Their Ages

Beginner Warriors:
- Rank 1: 100–120 years
- Rank 2: 140–160 years
- Rank 3: 180–200 years

Intermediary Warriors:
- Rank 4: 250–300 years
- Rank 5: 350–400 years
- Rank 6: 450–500 years

Advanced Warriors:
- Rank 7 (King): 500–1,500 years
- Rank 8 (Monarch): 2,500–5,000 years
- Rank 9 (Emperor): 10,000–100,000 years

Speed of Warriors (Brute Speed Only)

Rank	Speed
1	50 m/s
2	150 m/s
3	250 m/s
4	1,000 m/s
5	2,000 m/s
6	3,000 m/s
7	10,000 m/s
8	50,000 m/s
9	100,000 m/s

These are peak speeds and cannot be sustained over long distances. For extended travel, warriors reduce their speed by at least three times.

Soul Cultivation and the Spiritual Imprint

The Spiritual Imprint is engraved within the user's soul and upgrades as Soul Cultivation increases. It synchronizes body and soul, enhancing all-round talent. As soul cultivation rises, so does the user's talent.

Talent Grades (matched with Spiritual Imprint):
- E grade: Maximum Rank 2 Warrior
- D grade: Maximum Rank 4 Warrior
- C grade: Maximum Rank 6 Warrior
- B grade: Maximum Rank 7 Warrior
- A grade: Maximum Rank 8 Warrior
- S grade: Maximum Rank 9 Warrior

Mastery of Secret Techniques

Five tiers: Foundational, Novice, Intermediary, Advanced, Elite.

Weapon Realms

Intent → Heart → Soul → Manifestation → Myriad → Unity → Domain → Abstract

Mind Reading: The Three Situations

Mind reading is an extraordinarily rare ability. There are only three circumstances under which it is possible:

First: When the cultivation gap is extreme. A Rank 7 Warrior can perceive a mortal's brainwaves, decrypt them, and even reverse-control the mortal's brain. Immortals, who wield Immortal Essence (a fusion of Spiritual and Soul Essence), can interfere with Spiritual and Soul Essence to a limited degree — gaining information and influencing thoughts at a superficial level. A warrior with an exceptionally strong will can resist such influence through instinctual rejection.

Second: Through marriage. Marriage is a sacred ritual approved by the Heavenly Dao. The resulting soul connection allows spouses to read each other's minds.

Third: Through the Soul Search secret technique. Every Soul Search leaves injury on the searched soul, ranging from minor to lethal. There exists no Immortal-level Soul Search, as Immortals possess no souls. Even the most efficient Soul Search method will always wound the soul it is used on.

PART TWO: LI GANG'S INTELLECTUAL FEATS

(Volumes 1, 3, and 4 — updated with all available material)

Feat 1 — Early Language and Skill Acquisition (Months 1–6)

Categories: General Intelligence 9/10 | Emotional Intelligence 8/10 | Adversity Capacity 9/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 9/10 | Adaptability 9/10

As a transmigrated soul confined to an infant's body, Li Gang faced severe psychological depression and acute sensory restriction. He recognized the danger of mental collapse and made a decisive choice: suppress emotion entirely and keep his brain active through constant observation and deduction. He forced himself to notice everything in granular detail, using mental exercises to preserve his sanity — transforming suffering into a discipline, and restriction into training.

Feat 2 — Hiding the Toxin Refinement Art from Li Minghui

Categories: General Intelligence 7/10 | Deception 8/10 | Manipulation 7/10 | Adaptability 8/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 8/10

When Li Minghui discovered the Toxin Refinement Art, Li Gang instantly recognized his father would confiscate it upon learning its grade. Under the pressure of his father's aura, he maintained a consistent story about finding it in the library, used his young age as a shield, and refused to surrender it. When his father sent his mother to retrieve it, Li Gang kept it hidden on his person and defended his possession through calculated stubbornness and performed vulnerability.

Feat 3 — Poisoning and Controlling Li Hai and Others

Categories: General Intelligence 7/10 | Social Intelligence 6/10 | Manipulation 9/10 | Deception 8/10 | Tactics 8/10 | Strategy 8/10

Li Gang identified that poison mastery gave him unique leverage in a region where toxicology was barely understood. He systematically targeted Li Hai — older and mentally naive — by deceiving him into ingesting poison, then used the antidote as a leash over the family. He expanded this hidden network methodically. Even when caught by Li Hao, the victims never realized they had missed their window of freedom. The depth of psychological control required no brute force — only chemistry and patience.

Feat 4 — Battle Against Li Yuxong (Age 10)

Categories: General Intelligence 8/10 | Tactics 9/10 | Strategy 8/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 9/10 | Adaptability 9/10

Li Gang recognized his fundamental weakness clearly: no formal battle training, poor battlefield awareness. Rather than attempting complex techniques that would expose those gaps, he employed strict defensive patience — waiting for Li Yuxong to attack first, then exploiting the openings created by the opponent's own momentum. When Li Yuxong's attacks became blunt through overconfidence, Li Gang moved *forward* instead of backward, breaking the expected pattern entirely. He attacked the eye to force a head turn, then used his opponent's momentum for a backward throw. This was not instinct. It was strategic patience and precise exploitation of psychological patterns.

Feat 5 — Awakening Ceremony Revelation and Planning

Categories: General Intelligence 10/10 | Foresight 10/10 | Strategy 10/10 | Planning 10/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 10/10 | Deception 9/10

During the Awakening Ceremony — the one window where Heavenly Dao's involvement prevented his thoughts from being monitored — Li Gang conducted the most consequential reasoning of his life.

Key Deductions:
- Books appeared in the library (the Elemental Emperor history, the Toxin Refinement Art) immediately after Li Minghui had cleared it. This was statistically impossible — someone was monitoring him and seeding his path.
- The only available cultivation method (poison) required no high cultivation, appearing at the precise moment he needed it. This pointed to mind-reading capability.
- Li Minghui's personal involvement in clearing the library was out of character for a man too busy for such tasks — indicating external control over those around him.
- Enemies could not only read thoughts but also manipulate people as puppets.

The Ultimate Plan: Li Gang declared "conquer the world" as his goal during the ceremony — not because he wanted it, but because it was the most operationally spacious goal he could adopt while letting enemies believe they understood him. He implanted psychological cues in his subconscious designed to activate at future inflection points, creating a layer of decision-making enemies could not read, because even he would not consciously know it was happening. He made himself appear less intelligent than he was. He made his genius look like luck.

Feat 6 — The "Hidden Enemy" Probe Through Travel Plans

Categories: General Intelligence 9/10 | Strategy 9/10 | Deception 8/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 9/10 | Foresight 8/10

Noticing suspicious shifts in his own behavior, Li Gang suspected external thought-control. He constructed a probe: deliberately form the idea of travelling to the Heavenly Demon Sect — a destination that ran entirely against his cautious nature regarding his high-level techniques. The probe worked on two levels: if he actually went, it proved thought alteration; and crucially, the decision itself arrived via subconscious pattern recognition rather than conscious deliberation — meaning his surface thoughts remained clean while the probe ran beneath them.

Feat 7 — Ji Changchen Extortion Scheme

Categories: General Intelligence 8/10 | Social Intelligence 9/10 | Manipulation 10/10 | Deception 9/10 | Tactics 10/10 | Strategy 9/10 | Adaptability 9/10

Li Gang recognized that Immortal influence was pushing him toward attacking Ji Changchen — and rather than resist it blindly, he identified Ji Changchen as the Celestial Sect's Holy Son and turned the engineered confrontation into profit. He grazed Ji Changchen with a poisoned arrow (the protector failed to detect it due to Immortal interference), then stabbed through Ji Changchen's body while he was distracted. He waged deliberate psychological warfare against guardian Liang Shuiyun — targeting eye and ear to shatter her emotional composure — and bluffed a Spiritual Imprint capable of instant execution. Starting negotiations at 100,000 Spirit Stones, he pushed to 1 million plus a Heavenly Lotus.

His escape was an open trap: he demanded Liang Shuiyun scatter the Spirit Stones and hand over the ring first, creating an apparent vulnerability. She knew it was dangerous. She had no choice. Li Gang shoved Ji Changchen aside, seized everything, and teleported away using the Spatial Order. He had turned the fact that hidden enemies were monitoring him into a survival advantage — knowing they would protect their investment.

Feat 8 — Lin Fan Infiltration and Memory Extraction

Categories: General Intelligence 10/10 | Social Intelligence 9/10 | Manipulation 10/10 | Deception 10/10 | Tactics 10/10 | Strategy 10/10 | Planning 10/10 | Adaptability 9/10

Upon hearing Lin Fan's "accidental" revelation about Wang Xueyao and the Immortals, Li Gang immediately deduced Lin Fan was either a scammer or a genuine reincarnator, and chose to Soul Search him to verify. He had Chen Tao investigate Lin Fan's contacts, discovering a subordinate network built through blackmail. He contacted Li Meiying to probe her relationship with Lin Fan, confirmed her fear response indicated leverage was being held over her, and built a 50+ person hunting party — including Xi Chen, whom he positioned as a hidden assassin instructed to play dead then strike.

He tracked Lin Fan to a hidden cave by deducing that Lin Fan would retreat to where four danger zones converged — the statistical "safest" intersection. He arrived feigning helpfulness, lowered Lin Fan's guard, and waited until Lin Fan began pill refinement — a

state requiring maximum soul concentration. He struck at that precise peak, causing the refinement to backfire. He had also informed Jiang Fugui in advance as a contingency. He never gambled more than necessary, even when appearing reckless.

Feat 9 — Surviving Wang Xueyao's Test via Soul Search Method

Categories: General Intelligence 9/10 | Foresight 9/10 | Adversity Capacity 9/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 10/10 | Adaptability 8/10

After surviving near-death, Li Gang analyzed the pattern of conveniences in his life: the Soul Spring appearing when he worried about soul cultivation, the Heavenly Lotus when he needed to sense his soul, the Arcanae Soul Fusion when he worried about foundation. Too many coincidences. He deduced that Wang Xueyao either wanted him dead indirectly, or was testing his cognitive ability. The fact that higher-dimensional information had been filtered from Lin Fan's memories proved a third party — the Emperors — had intervened to protect him. This confirmed his theory that enemies needed something from him and would not permit his death.

He also deduced he possessed a Special Ability he was not consciously aware of, and that both Emperors and Wang Xueyao were interested in it. He deliberately left most of Lin Fan's memories unprocessed to avoid revealing to enemies that his capabilities exceeded their estimates.

Feat 10 — The Ultimate Goal Deception (Su Zun Dialogue)

Categories: General Intelligence 10/10 | Emotional Intelligence 10/10 | Manipulation 10/10 | Deception 10/10 | Strategy 10/10 | Planning 10/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 10/10 | Foresight 10/10

Immortal Zhu wanted Li Gang to choose "Domination" as his goal. Li Gang was instructed by Su Zun to browse his memories and name what he "truly wanted." Immortal Zhu deliberately withheld interference, believing Li Gang's Awakening Ceremony arrangements were limited to the stated goal.

Li Gang's true desire was peace — a quiet life without entanglement. The psychological cue he had planted activated the instant he formed any goal besides peace, confirming permanently that not only his thoughts but his memories could be read and altered. He fought the forced declaration — speaking slowly, attempting resistance — and then said "DOMINATION" loudly, with deliberate emphasis.

It was a taunt. The declaration meant: *the domination I pursue begins with dominating you.*

Immortal Zhu saw through it entirely. That was the point. The open scheme was its own weapon: "I know you want me to conquer the world. If you stop it, you fall into my trap. If you

don't, you give up on what you want from me." Li Gang did not need to hide from Immortal Zhu. He needed to humiliate him in plain sight while being utterly untouchable.

Feat 11 — Hiding True Intelligence Through Deliberate Losses

Categories: General Intelligence 10/10 | Deception 10/10 | Strategy 10/10 | Planning 10/10 | Foresight 10/10

Throughout his life, Li Gang constructed a consistent performance of lesser intelligence. He lost deliberately to Su Zun at chess, making his defensive insight appear a fluke. He made "obvious mistakes" in reasoning — forgetting cover page languages, appearing to struggle with deductions that should have been immediate. His occasional brilliant moves were framed as luck or exceptional effort, never as baseline capacity.

He went further: he did not allow himself to fully know his own intelligence, because he knew his memories could be read. Any self-awareness of his true capability would be visible to enemies. By genuinely operating with a kind of authentic cognitive humility — deliberately avoiding self-assessment — he created uncertainty in his monitored thoughts that no amount of external observation could resolve. He protected his greatest weapon by never drawing it.

Feat 12 — The Ultimate Scheme: Triggering the Special Ability

Categories: General Intelligence 10/10 | Foresight 10/10 | Strategy 10/10 | Planning 10/10 | Deception 10/10 | Manipulation 10/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 10/10

This was the long game — set during the Awakening Ceremony itself and spanning an entire lifetime.

Li Gang could feel his Special Ability from birth but never consciously acknowledged it. During the Awakening Ceremony, he experimented with activation through subconscious methods and discovered it required all thoughts — active and passive — to simultaneously cease. Near-death was the natural trigger. Before rebirth, he had deliberately broken this ability so that it would tend to separate from him upon activation, creating a perfect trap for anyone attempting to steal it.

To engineer the triggering event, he manufactured enemies and consequences across decades: creating enmity with all Four Factions through Huang Shu, making himself appear a threat to the Li Family, knowing the Immortals would keep his parents as hostages rather than kill them — but also knowing that the *appearance* of total destruction would trigger the emotional shutdown he needed. He used Wu Yuan's desire to separate him from Wang Xueyao, created openings for Wu Yuan through Huang Shu, escaped to the Central Continent under a false persona, and arranged for Huang Shu's indirect death through Spirit Beasts, knowing Wu Yuan would use the village massacre as leverage.

Returning home to find his village destroyed would produce complete mental blankness. No active thoughts, no passive thoughts. The Special Ability would activate, separate, and become "stealable." Anyone who took it would face its true nature: a trap designed to kill its thief.

The layers:
- Surface: A cautious warrior surviving by his wits.
- Immortal Zhu's view: The Timeless Demon God reincarnated, executing clever schemes.
- Wang Xueyao's test: Possibly the Creator, based on memory absorption.
- Reality: The Creator himself — who planned everything before rebirth.

Immortal Zhu's final realization was the sharpest irony of all: *"You had always been the Creator! But why did you scheme against me? If you had asked, I would have directly sacrificed my life for you!"* Li Gang never needed to scheme. Immortal Zhu would have served willingly. The elaborate deception was not for survival — it was for a purpose beyond even Immortal Zhu's understanding.

Feat 13 — Alliance with Jin Huang

Categories: Social Intelligence | Emotional Intelligence | Reasoning | Foresight | Strategy

(See full analysis in Part Three below — this feat is inextricably linked to Jin Huang's own intelligence.)

Feat 14 — Post-Catastrophe Pill Market Timing

Categories: General Intelligence | Social Intelligence | Foresight | Strategy | Planning

Li Gang opened his alchemy shop precisely when the Giant Hand catastrophe had created massive demand for healing and recovery pills, then scaled into a dynasty-wide brand. He analyzed that imports were costly and local supply scarce, launched a reasonably priced and high-quality pill line synchronized with peak need, and systematically recruited and trained alchemists to multiply output and expand Renhuo across the Wei Dynasty.

Feat 15 — Long-Term Bloodroot Essence Talent Boost (Mass Corpses)

Categories: General Intelligence | Adversity Capacity | Foresight | Deception | Strategy

Beginning with low initial talent as a reincarnator in a spiritually starved continent, Li Gang identified the interaction between blood essence, Soulbind Ether, and the Spiritual Imprint as a means of raising his talent ceiling from D to A grade. He methodically chose low-value

populations as initial fuel, scaled toward higher-ranked warriors as needed, tracked diminishing returns precisely, and stopped when further gains required Rank 7–8 corpses he could not yet safely obtain. The recipe was kept entirely secret. The scale of what he did was hidden behind the operations of Renhuo Trading.

Feat 16 — Negotiation with King Wei Han

Categories: General Intelligence | Social Intelligence | Foresight | Manipulation | Tactics | Strategy

Li Gang negotiated a complex, layered deal: a 50% tax on trading profit, 70% of disciples' future income, training alchemists for the kingdom, the chief-alchemist post, and ultimately a Global Commerce and Trade Chamber premium token — offered in exchange for 20 years of free Rank 5 pill work. He opened by presenting a Rank 5 Vitality Pill as an apology, resetting the relationship and displaying generosity. He forced acknowledgment of Wei's structural resource crisis, then offered to solve it wholesale rather than make a single transaction. He traded the hard 60% tax cap down to 50% by adding alchemist training — then shifted the long-term burden to disciples' future profits. He knew that once he surpassed the dynasty, the 20-year contract would be unenforceable while the premium token would remain in his hands permanently.

Feat 17 — Building Renhuo Trading as a Dual-Front Operation

Categories: General Intelligence | Social Intelligence | Foresight | Manipulation | Deception | Strategy

Li Gang chose the name "Renhuo" — combining "kindness" and "fire" — to appeal simultaneously to idealists and power-seekers while aligning with his public alias Ren. The training requirements for sellers (storage, handling, pill basics) served as a pretext for systematic ideological conditioning, with trained personnel placed in courts and foreign dynasties as loyal operatives. Parallel product lines in formations and forging made Renhuo financially indispensable to Wei while quietly shifting power away from the throne. The result was a continent-spanning commercial organization that was also a spy network, an ideological apparatus, and a revenue engine — all under the appearance of a trading company.

Feat 18 — Letting Wei Han Discover His Spies

Categories: General Intelligence | Foresight | Adversity Capacity | Manipulation | Deception | Tactics

Li Gang used large-scale infiltration while expecting — and planning for — exposure. Before ever meeting Wei Han face to face, he quietly seeded sophisticated poisons in Wei's alchemists and promising junior warriors, designed to activate through specific gas and antidote triggers controlled by himself or delivered by Demonic allies. When Wei Han sprang the trap and had him imprisoned, Li Gang had already pre-arranged a contingency: the Demonic Faction would arrive with antidotes at the critical moment, the poison crisis would force Wei to need Li Gang more than he feared him, and imprisonment itself became the mechanism that caused Wei Han to relax — and then commit to measures that left him fully exposed.

Feat 19 — Twin Poison Scheme on Wei Alchemists and Students

Categories: Manipulation | Deception | Foresight | Emotional Intelligence | Tactics

Li Gang poisoned senior alchemists with a latent toxin activatable by a gas his spies could release after his "arrest." He gave junior disciples — including the Third Prince Wei Chan — a compatible second poison that would remain dormant until triggered by a specific external catalyst hidden inside the Demonic "antidote" pills. He predicted Wei Han would test the antidote, prioritize the young to preserve the dynasty's future, personally worsen their condition through that very act, and collapse under guilt. This is the weaponization of paternal love: the king's most righteous instinct became the mechanism of his defeat.

Feat 20 — Exploiting the Demonic Faction as Both Ally and Foil

Categories: Foresight | Social Intelligence | Manipulation | Deception | Strategy

Years before the critical moment, Li Gang arranged a resource-for-information alliance with Mo Tiancheng through Wu Meng as intermediary, ensuring he had non-Wei support. He pre-arranged that, if he disappeared for three days after meeting Wei Han, the Demons would execute a specific sequence: release activation gas, dispatch Mo Chang with antidote pills and a broadcast crystal to the court. He constructed a three-cornered game — Wei, Li Gang, Demons — in which each party believed they could outplay the others, while Li Gang had privately written most of the script.

Feat 21 — Binding Wei Han with the Rank 6 Corruption Poison

Categories: Manipulation | Foresight | Emotional Intelligence | Social Intelligence

After releasing Wei Han from the immediate crisis, Li Gang converted the one-off emergency into permanent dependency. He supplied a one-week antidote for the existing poison crisis to demonstrate usefulness, then immediately introduced a Rank 6 Corruption Poison targeting Wei Han's Heavenly Core directly — ongoing antidotes conditional on ongoing

cooperation. He left Wei Han the outer image of a righteous king while making him a controlled asset. Wei Han's conscience was preserved. His autonomy was not.

Feat 22 — The 10,000-Man Rotating Circular Maze Formation

Categories: General Intelligence | Foresight | Tactics | Field Crafting | Adversity Capacity | Deception

Facing a 5-million-strong Shu Dynasty army with only 1.5 million Wei warriors and the superior open-field general Shu Pang, Li Gang studied classic formations (circular, sword, eagle, snake, lotus) and invented a hybrid rotating circular maze: internal layers that rotated continuously, separated attacking and defensive warriors, archers concealed in inner rings, and array inscriptions on shields that blocked spiritual scouting entirely. Over a decade, he hand-selected warriors with Earth-type defensive imprints and conditioned them to switch attack and defense roles on micro-timing while maintaining continuous rotation. He deliberately revealed a front entrance to invite Shu's snake formation inward — ensuring they must enter and be ground down — while outer layers and arrow curtains eliminated any attempt to simply destroy the formation from outside. The maze was not designed to be impenetrable. It was designed so that penetrating it cost more than the victor could afford.

Feat 23 — Using the Formation's Array Secret to Bind Jin Long

Categories: Social Intelligence | Manipulation | Foresight | Strategy

Li Gang shared the shield-inscription array formula with Jin Long — knowing that Jin Long's combination of greed and rationality would cause him to massacre all witnesses to monopolize the secret, thereby binding Golden Crow's military doctrine to Renhuo's innovations. He gave a king something uniquely valuable and, in doing so, made that king quietly dependent on Li Gang's framework without ever issuing a command.

Feat 24 — Anticipating Shu Pang's Adaptation Inside the Maze

Categories: Foresight | Tactics | Thinking/Reasoning | Adversity Capacity

Li Gang recognized that any static maze would eventually be cracked by a numerically overwhelming and intelligent opponent. He built redundancy into every layer: dynamic gap-closing mechanisms, archers that punished stalling outside, and defensive thresholds so high that exploiting a weakness was always slow and brutally costly. He designed the battle so that Shu Pang's local "victory" — reaching the formation's core — would coincide with the annihilation of nearly all Shu fighting power. He accepted losing the formation. He planned to win the war.

Feat 25 — Multi-Decade Revenge Lure for Master Huang and Master Lei

Categories: Foresight | Manipulation | Deception | Strategy | Adversity Capacity

Li Gang chose the Northern Continent for his war specifically because its lower ceiling of power made it easier to limit third-party interference. He built Renhuo and expanded Wei not only for political dominance but to generate the kind of multi-million-soldier conflict that would justify deploying space-locking arrays. He counted on Huang and Lei's rational greed: they would invest years constructing a massive space-lock formation, but that investment would also reveal the core's location — forcing them into his engineered kill-zone the moment he stole it.

Feat 26 — Stealing the Space-Lock Formation Core from Shu Pang

Categories: General Intelligence | Deception | Tactics | Foresight | Social Intelligence

Li Gang deduced that Shu Pang was carrying the space-lock formation's core by observing the disproportionate zeal with which his guards protected him — far exceeding what command authority alone would warrant. He conducted targeted assaults to create localized chaos, during which disguised warriors he had pre-positioned replaced Shu soldiers and stripped Shu Pang of every spatial ring — leaving fakes behind. Once the core was in his hands, Huang and Lei could no longer deactivate their own formation. They were trapped inside a permanently sealed arena of their own construction.

Feat 27 — Post-Battle Psychological Warfare Against Shu Pang

Categories: Emotional Intelligence | Social Intelligence | Tactics | Strategy

After 4.7 million Shu deaths, Li Gang met Shu Pang at the formation's core and chose honesty over dominance. He acknowledged Shu Pang's extraordinary skill in cracking the "unbreakable" maze — earning genuine respect — then immediately reframed events by having Shu Pang confront the battlefield visually, not abstractly. He offered mercy framed as rational bravery, converting a proud enemy general into a living monument to Li Gang's inevitability.

Feat 28 — Stacking Multiple Levers to Conquer the Northern Continent

Categories: General Intelligence | Social Intelligence | Foresight | Manipulation | Strategy

Li Gang orchestrated the simultaneous alignment of: Renhuo's economic power, Wei's martial expansion, Golden Crow's conditional loyalty through Jin Huang's pre-planted instructions and Jin Long's alliance, Demonic Faction support for covert operations, and staggered wars against Shu and Wu Dynasties timed to prevent mutual reinforcement. He secured Wei's internal dependence through alchemy and poison, used Wei as a neutral distribution hub to push Renhuo into enemy territories, and timed the full-scale Shu war so that his maze and Jin Long's intervention annihilated Shu's main forces in a single day. The thrones remained nominally intact. All real power was his.

Feat 29 — Deducing Body Possession (Monarchs' Parasite Scheme)

Categories: General Intelligence 10/10 | Thinking/Reasoning 10/10 | Foresight 9/10 | Adversity Capacity 10/10

After waking five days late in Jin Huang's cabin with no memory of the intervening period, Li Gang immediately began reconstructing what had happened. He found the Spatial Order drained of energy — something he could not have done himself even if he had tried, and something requiring Emperor-level capability to accomplish silently. He deduced that the drain was deliberate misdirection: designed to make him discard the Spatial Order voluntarily, cutting off his most effective escape mechanism. He discarded it.

Later, in the remote hamlet, he noticed the calendar discrepancy — the date was four days later than it should have been — and realized he had woken up, acted, and been put back to sleep without any memory of it. From Lin Fan's processed memories, he confirmed the mechanism: a soul parasite operating in phases, taking over the host body for windows of one to two days with roughly one-day gaps between sessions. One Monarch was in him. The other was in Shi Tian.

This deduction was completed with no external assistance, no clues beyond a calendar discrepancy and the drained Spatial Order, while severely injured and recovering in a stranger's home. He then correctly inferred the Monarch's identity (Huang, not Lei), the location of Chen Wang's party before they arrived, the reason Huang needed him to willingly discard the Spatial Order (Lei had left tracking means on it), the approximate timeline of Lei's movements through the Golden Crow, and Lei's intent to approach Prince Jin Bo through Shi Tian's false decree. He deduced the full shape of a conspiracy he had never been meant to discover, using only the gap between a calendar and his last clear memory.

Feat 30 — Voluntary Capture as a Strategic Move

Categories: General Intelligence 9/10 | Manipulation 9/10 | Adversity Capacity 10/10 | Strategy 9/10 | Deception 8/10

Having no Spatial Order, a body occupied by a Rank 8 parasite, and wounds severe enough that fighting was impossible, Li Gang chose to surrender himself to Chen Wang's forces —

deliberately. The reasoning was precise: Master Huang could not be directly bargained with. But if Li Gang could get Chen Wang to carry messages, and if he could make Huang understand that Lei was now operating against both of them using Shi Tian's body and the Golden Crow's military apparatus, then Huang's interests would align with Li Gang's survival rather than his death. The "capture" was also a message to Lei: *I know where you are and what you are doing.* Li Gang told Chen Wang that his master was in danger before Chen Wang had any reason to believe it, demonstrating a precision of knowledge that left no room for dismissal. He had no leverage to threaten. He had only the quality of his reasoning — and he used it as a weapon.

Feat 31 — Placing Chu You with Prince Jin Bo

Categories: Social Intelligence 9/10 | Foresight 9/10 | Strategy 9/10 | Manipulation 8/10

Knowing that Lei would attempt to manipulate the Golden Crow's internal politics through Prince Jin Bo, Li Gang dispatched Chu You — Zudas's childhood sweetheart, who held emotional leverage over him — to Jin Bo's court before Lei could make his move. He anticipated that Jin Long would move against the Shu Dynasty through a sea route, using House Yin under the command of "Shi Tian" (actually Lei), and that Lei's larger plan involved triggering internal rebellion while Jin Long's forces were committed. By reaching Jin Bo first, Li Gang placed his own pawn in a position that would intersect with Lei's scheme — a counter-move inside an enemy's strategy that the enemy had not yet fully revealed.

CATASTROPHE PLAN

Li Gang is the Creator — the being who existed before the Divine Spirit World itself, and who chose rebirth deliberately. The life of "Li Gang" is not a man reacting to a hostile world; it's an architect walking through a building he designed. Critically, this is a fact about the *hidden layer* of the story. The conscious, on-the-ground Li Gang does not know this about himself for most of the timeline — which is exactly why his journey reads, from the inside, as genuine step-by-step deduction, complete with wrong turns.

His Special Ability is "Creator's Will," formed from a Heavenly Dao Fragment (the omnipotent/omnipresent/omniscient Heavenly Dao's fragment, which every "Wanderer" — reincarnator/transmigrator — possesses in some form). It is deliberately broken: it can only activate when all conscious *and* subconscious thought ceases simultaneously, and once activated it tends to separate from his body — making it look stealable to anyone watching. When active, he fights at Rank 8+ strength with deterrence so severe that even Emperors and Wang Xueyao won't risk a killing blow against him, but he also loses the ability to distinguish ally from foe, able to lean only on pre-set cues to limit the damage.

The power structure arrayed against him:

- **Immortals (Zhu, Chen) — can read, influence, and alter the thoughts of anyone below Warrior level. Not omnipotent (a strong enough foundational will can instinctively resist specific actions), but comprehensive enough that any *consciously formed* plan is visible to them.**
- **Emperors (Elemental, Soul, Void, Timeless Demon) — the highest native power, operating across timelines, who have read the Timeless Demon God's memories to approximate the future and rearranged terrain/artifacts across centuries accordingly. They want Li Gang alive for his Special Ability.**
- **The Law of Unpredictability — a byproduct of the Law of Balance, triggered into existence because the Emperors' own existence unbalanced the world. The instant a future is foreseen (by hax or by raw intelligence), probability nudges at the moment of conscious decision to push events away from what was foreseen. It isn't sentient and can't plan ahead — it only grips *live conscious decisions.***

II. The Awakening Ceremony — The Only Unwatched Thirty Minutes

The Ceremony involved the Heavenly Dao directly, and for that window alone, neither Immortals nor Emperors could read him. Everything that followed had to be seeded here, because this was the only gap that would ever exist.

What the child deduced in that window, from clues gathered even earlier:

- **His father personally cleared the family library for him — wildly out of character for a man "too busy for domestic matters."**
- **The books that appeared — Elemental Emperor history and a Toxin Refinement manual — were exactly what he needed, when he needed it: the Elemental Emperor text directly contradicted his clan's orthodox doctrine (which worshipped the Emperor as infallible), something no rational father would let a child read; and the poison path, requiring no high talent, surfaced the moment his mediocre talent closed every other door. A high-grade poison manual simply isn't something you hand an unsupervised child.**
- **At his birth Talent Test, he'd already grasped the world wasn't a conventional scientific one but a cultivation/supernatural one.**

Conclusion: someone was monitoring him in real time *and* could puppet people physically around him — mind-reading plus environmental control. Any consciously-held plan would be seen; any consciously-chosen ally could be turned. No conscious plan could survive. The plan had to live below the readable threshold — as instinct, not decision.

He also worked out the Special Ability's trigger requirement (total simultaneous conscious/subconscious blankness) and that the triggering event therefore *could not be consciously engineered* by him — it had to be built by something that didn't know it was building it.

What he built — the subconscious operating system, with four properties:

1. **Subthreshold invisibility — cues fire as apparent natural instinct; surveillance sees ordinary human psychology.**
2. **Self-concealment from Li Gang himself — he suppressed his own awareness of the architecture's existence. This is structural, not caution: knowing it existed would make it readable. When a cue fires, he experiences it as genuine intuition, because to him it *is* genuine intuition.**
3. **Self-validation tripwire — one cue was built to permanently record proof of thought-alteration the instant he ever found himself pursuing any goal other than his true one (peace). It fired correctly, years later, during the Su Zun dialogue.**
4. **Forward-compatibility — the cues were conditional responses to categories of situation, not fixed scripts, so they could function across scenarios he hadn't yet lived through.**

He also, at this point, already knew *of* the Law of Unpredictability and of the Timeless Demon God — how, the sources agree, remains an open mystery never resolved on-page. Document 2 flags this explicitly rather than inventing an answer, and that honesty is worth preserving rather than papering over.

The stated goal — "conquer the world" — was declared at the Ceremony as a layered weapon: it matched what Immortal Zhu wanted (ensuring non-interference), it was the most operationally spacious goal available (justifying anything), it was a direct taunt (*the domination I pursue begins with dominating you*), and it would later be forcibly tested — and would crack — during the Su Zun dialogue.

At this stage, consciously, Li Gang does not yet know Immortals exist as a separate category — he believes Emperors are the strongest force and conflates "Mind Readers" with Emperors. He hasn't yet grasped the scale of higher dimensions. This is the visible, surface-level Li Gang that the architecture conceals even from himself.

III. Early Deductions — Mapping the Unseen Powers

From anomalies he observed directly (sealed chambers gaining/losing matter with no openings; matter appearing inside nested sealed enclosures without disturbing the boundaries between them; "disappeared" water/air actually being mass-conserved rather than annihilated; anomalies independent of Spiritual Essence and unexplainable by any known magic; reflected light illuminating sealed spaces with no valid 3D optical path) — he concluded 3D space is embedded in a higher-dimensional structure matter and radiation can cross. His own illustration: a circle drawn in 2D is a sealed sphere to a being confined to that plane — but a 3D being can send light perpendicular to the plane, bounce it off an external point, and strike the circle's interior from above, bypassing the "wall" entirely. From this he inferred Emperors might inhabit and watch from higher dimensions — hence his early (mistaken) belief that Emperors *are* the Mind Readers, and that Mind Readers and the Elemental Emperor are roughly equal, possibly rivalrous, powers.

IV. Acquiring a Shield — Wang Xueyao

Having concluded he was being groomed as an expendable pawn in a high-level struggle, he needed an ally capable of standing toe-to-toe with Mind Readers and the Elemental Emperor. When he met Wang Xueyao, he calibrated every interaction to lower her guard and manufacture rapport convertible into leverage, with a simple thesis: if her power rivaled the forces orchestrating his life, her presence alone would shield him while he investigated.

His read on her: she showed no spiritual imprint after her own Awakening (like him); she'd reached Rank 5 at an age that should be impossible unless she'd been cultivating her *soul* from birth, which requires a Spiritual Imprint — which requires an Awakening Ceremony she never underwent (as "Wang Xueyao"). Conclusion: she's a reincarnator, or someone powerful occupying Wang Xueyao's body, carried over from a prior life's Awakening. He doesn't know exactly how strong — only that she's the strongest he knows, which was enough to slot her, unknowingly, into the "shield" cue he'd already pre-set.

He now frames the board as three factions: himself (with Wang Xueyao as temporary ally), the Emperors, and the Immortals — still believing, at this point, the latter two are the same thing.

The Monarch Inheritance Test. He anchored himself to her for years, tracking the frequency of assassination attempts and anomalies, on the hypothesis that if hostile action flared only when he left her proximity, it would prove the orchestrators feared her. (Why wouldn't the Emperors see through something this simple? Because he was being underestimated — no one expected a "Wanderer" to be *this* intelligent, so the Immortals hadn't bothered hiding themselves carefully around him.) When Wang Xueyao cleanly killed a Rank 5 Spiritfire Wolf and left his side — baited away by the Elemental Emperor — he faced an immediate assassination attempt. The experiment confirmed two things: the Elemental Emperor had a direct stake in the Monarch Inheritance's outcome, and Wang Xueyao's deterrence was real.

V. The Monarch Inheritance — Building the Web

The Inheritance is an isolated space that boosts soul affinity, cognition, and talent. Entry teleports everyone randomly with no sun to navigate by, making group formation hard — except Li Gang forced Wang Xueyao's hand and pulled her through with him by holding on at the last second. His own plan activates once she leaves him.

Creating the web. Using the Spiritfire Wolf's corpse as a bluff, he approached Huang Weimin (Shadow Phoenix Faction — assassination and disguise specialists) and extracted: the cover identity of "Ren Ying" (a Thunderous Peak spy Huang Weimin had actually caught and killed), a disguise technique, access to Shadow Phoenix's intelligence network, and intel on the Bloody Pond. In exchange, Huang Weimin wanted Huang Ling (already Rank 6 at under 30) eliminated.

Wearing Ren Ying, he infiltrated the Spirit Dragon Faction and approached Long Yifan — who wanted Li Gang dead after falling for Wang Xueyao at first sight (itself engineered: the Elemental Emperor had poisoned Long Yifan to provoke that obsession). To win Long Yifan's trust, Li Gang faked his own death with the disguise technique, sending a substitute head. Long Yifan's existing desire for Li Gang's death made the deception land even harder.

Gathering the Azure Mountain Warriors. Knowing that only talisman-holding factions (not Azure Mountain) could coordinate quickly inside the featureless small world, he kidnapped Spirit Dragon members to obtain their map and leaked news of his own death six months early. Scattered Azure Mountain warriors independently converged near Region 23 — deliberately chosen because it sat beside the Bloodfiend Pond, a site with fatal pull for Huang Ling given her unstable, too-fast cultivation foundation.

In parallel, he staged a "hero saves the beauty" with Tang Liuyue — hiring Shadow Phoenix assassins to target her while he personally repelled a beast tide he'd engineered — to win her trust (and, candidly, partly fell for her himself in the process). An old Moonlit Sect disciple set the price of full trust at a Corpse Blossom. He obtained the seed from Huang Weimin but withheld full delivery — the blossom only matures through sacrificial death.

By this point he held indirect control of Shadow Phoenix, Spirit Dragon, Thunderous Peak (via Ren Ying), and partial leverage on Moonlit (via Tang Liuyue).

The Corpse Blossom scheme. Rather than harvest sacrifices himself, he dressed the requirement up as an official Thunderous Peak sect mission with outsized rewards attached. Disciples swarmed to volunteer — and became the unwitting sacrifices that matured the blossom, weaponizing greed and faction hierarchy so that Thunderous Peak eliminated its own people without ever realizing it was being used.

Manipulating Huang Ling and Li Yuxong. He revealed the Bloody Pond to Huang Ling through Huang Weimin — but had already tipped off the Moonlit Faction, who drained most of the Pond's essence first, forcing Huang Ling to spend heavy effort (and many sacrificed beasts) restoring it. That delay bought him the window to redirect Li Yuxong toward the same site. Meanwhile, "news" of his death kept circulating back to the Azure Mountain camp, and he deliberately slowed the remaining warriors' reassembly — full reunification would let them cross-reference maps and realize the gathering point was fraudulent. The managed trickle kept the camp stable, duty-bound, and penetrable by his planted operatives, with tightly monitored information flow.

The Region 23 priming of Li Yuxong. Without issuing any direct order (which would invite suspicion), he seeded three subconscious cues: a map-distribution clerk mentioning only 23 maps remained, someone audibly whispering "23" as Li Yuxong left, and the map itself showing Region 23 conveniently close. Grief and curiosity over his "brother's" death did the rest — Li Yuxong's eyes gravitated to Region 23 unprompted.

The Corpse Domain Trap. Disguised as Ren Ying, Li Gang was already positioned in the region with Thunderous Peak disciples, engineering an "accidental" meeting and team-up with Li Yuxong after a staged Spider-beast fight. He sent Li Yuxong to scout a cavern reeking of rotting blood — the same cavern leading to the Bloodfiend Pond — planting a sensory anchor. He then steered the Thunderous Peak squad into the lethal Corpse Domain itself (using a formation-expert disciple to navigate it safely) and used Li Yuxong as an external diversion while extracting the matured Corpse Blossom. As a prearranged contingency, he had Huang Shu ambush the fleeing survivors in a way that deliberately spread blood-scent into the air. Panicked, Li Yuxong's conditioned reflex sent him straight back to the blood-scented cavern — where he and Huang Ling, waiting there, were ensnared together by a Moonlit aphrodisiac poison, binding her to him exactly as intended. Simultaneously, the Moonlit Faction ambushed Huang Shu's own detachment; Li Gang delivered the finished Corpse Blossom to Tang Liuyue (cementing her reliance on "Ren Ying"), and Huang Shu — having independently learned Ren Ying's real identity and seen through the Moonlit angle — was eliminated via beast-attracting pheromones before he could become a liability. Huang Weimin, for his part, had no incentive to expose any of it: doing so would reveal he'd targeted his own disciple.

Controlling Huang Ling. A staged assault let Li Yuxong "rescue" Ren Ying, and Li Yuxong's unconditional vouching dragged a still-suspicious Huang Ling into alignment with the Li Family — an alliance that later deterred Jade Harbor City from moving against Azure Mountain outright. With all four factions under indirect control, Li Gang leaked each faction's weaknesses to the others, igniting a three-way war that Thunderous Peak opportunistically exploited from the margins; he then fed Spirit Dragon's fractured routes to the others, escalating it into a four-way bloodletting that gutted everyone's strength before the real Inheritance even began — and conveniently left none of them strong enough to threaten Azure Mountain later. When a leaked route got Huang Ling ambushed and she started deducing an inside traitor, Li Gang preempted the investigation by stabbing Li Yuxong with a lethal, slow-acting poison himself — correctly betting that her need for the antidote (and her marriage bond to Li Yuxong) would override her suspicion entirely, handing him total control of the Soul Pond opportunity.

Tang Liuyue's betrayal. Catching her secretly allied with Wang Xueyao (she'd started asking, uncharacteristically, exactly when he'd return), he preemptively dosed her with a delayed-action poison on pure suspicion: loyalty earns the antidote quietly; betrayal lets the poison finish the job once she expends enough Spiritual Essence. Risk mitigation over emotional presumption, as doctrine.

The Inheritance Tests. He deliberately wounded himself during the Trial of Perseverance to be handed — but not consume — a high-grade vitality pill reserved for the critically injured. He privately told Huang Ling the whole truth about his identity and his bond to Li Yuxong, and had her stage a Spiritual Beast rescue to cover him if Wang Xueyao attacked. He then lured Tang Liuyue onto a clifftop date specifically to provoke her hidden assassination attempt — which came, as predicted (he'd already caught her tell: a reflexive glance toward Wang Xueyao's camp when questioned). Wang Xueyao herself showed up; Li Gang stalled by narrating his own

plans, Huang Ling intervened on cue, and he dove off the cliff, surviving the sneak-attack wound only via the hidden pill he'd pocketed earlier — all while not consciously knowing his Special Ability was the real reason Wang Xueyao never finished him off. Tang Liuyue's dormant poison flared fatally during the next trial, read by everyone as ordinary cultivation backlash.

Outcome: four rival factions shattered each other; Azure Mountain came through almost untouched; Huang Ling was bound to the Li Family; Jade Harbor City was politically paralyzed; and no faction ever connected Ren Ying's trail of bodies back to Li Gang — only Huang Weimin and Huang Ling ever knew.

VI. The Deliberate Loophole — A Tacit Deal With the Elemental Emperor

Li Gang's aim here was invisible cooperation with an enemy who didn't know he was cooperating. The reasoning chain (flagged in the sources as partly speculative, since how Li Gang knew the Elemental Emperor could reverse time or hold future knowledge is never explained in-story): if the Elemental Emperor wants Wang Xueyao gone, and Li Gang also wants temporary freedom from her overbearing protection, then engineering a fight between Wang Xueyao and a Mind Reader satisfies both of them at once — without the Elemental Emperor ever realizing he's being used.

He let Wang Xueyao's own scheme (the Red Thread of Heaven, meant to bind him to her) succeed, on purpose — seeing through it but choosing to fall for it anyway, to keep her anchored at Azure Mountain and drawn into conflict with his real enemies. He expected her to merely *fight* a Mind Reader, buying him a short window of unobserved freedom; he did not expect her to kill one outright, which is exactly what happened.

Inside this same stretch, he built in a deliberate flaw: Huang Shu, the one person who knew Ren Ying was Li Gang. His survival chances were engineered to be effectively zero — but his survival was *decoupled* from the plan's success condition. Dead, the tactical goals were already satisfied. Alive against impossible odds, his survival would be undeniable proof that outside forces were interfering even in situations Li Gang had sealed shut — exactly the empirical data point needed to grasp the Law of Unpredictability without ever consciously naming it. When reports confirmed Huang Shu had survived and gone on to enable the family's massacre, the diagnostic succeeded — at the cost of the massacre itself. (Importantly: the *present*, acting Li Gang did not consciously know any of this was a planned diagnostic. He believed, at the time, that his safeguards were airtight, and the failure genuinely blindsided him — which only made him more rigorously cautious afterward, which is itself the behavior that defeats the Law of Unpredictability.)

VII. Manufacturing the Catastrophe

The Special Ability needed *real* involuntary cognitive shutdown, triggered by genuine devastation — a performed breakdown would be visible as performance to anyone reading his thoughts, and would be preempted. The triggering event therefore had to be built so indirectly, through so many intermediary agents over such a long timeline, that even Li Gang wouldn't recognize his own hand in it.

Three deliberate design choices made this work:

- **Huang Shu generated hostility with all Four Factions through his connection to Li Gang, making village destruction feel like the natural, inevitable output of ordinary factional politics rather than anything engineered.**
- **His parents were hostaged, not killed. Dead parents produce completed grief; hostage parents produce sustained dread — the ongoing psychological weight needed to guarantee total shutdown rather than survivable grief upon return.**
- **The destruction had to look inevitable, not manufactured — because recognizing engineering invites analysis, and analysis prevents a total blank.**

Wu Yuan supplied the actual trigger-pulling without ever being directed to. He already wanted Li Gang separated from Wang Xueyao's orbit; Li Gang simply gave him motive (through Huang Shu) and opportunity (through the factional chaos) and let Wu Yuan's own desire do the rest. This mattered for two reasons: it kept Li Gang's own fingerprints off the act, and Wu Yuan operated entirely outside Immortal Zhu's authorization — Zhu needed Li Gang alive and motivated and would never have sanctioned the total destruction of his home. Only an unsanctioned actor, pursuing his own agenda, could produce an outcome no Immortal would approve.

Li Gang's escape to the Central Continent under a false persona did three things at once: it let the pressure build in his absence without interference; it created the "returning home to find everything gone" structure, which is psychologically more total than witnessing destruction unfold (no chance to process *during*); and the false identity itself planted a divergence the Emperors' foresight hadn't accounted for. Huang Shu's own death, engineered indirectly through Spirit Beasts, ensured Wu Yuan would have fresh leverage (the massacre) to wield the moment Li Gang returned — closing the loop so that coming home felt like the world rendering judgment on his choices, not a targeted attack.

Return home → total mental blankness, conscious and subconscious → Special Ability activates, separates, appears stealable.

VIII. Forcing Every Hidden Player Onto the Stage

The competing imperatives at this point: the Elemental Emperor wants Li Gang dead, with Wang Xueyao as the obstacle; the Immortals want Li Gang alive and productive; and the Elemental Emperor can use Li Gang's crisis as a mechanism to remove an Immortal via Wang Xueyao in the process. With his own Special Ability as bait, Li Gang forces every faction onto the board simultaneously.

IX. The Central Continent — Calibration and Intelligence

With distance from Azure Mountain, Li Gang began deliberately testing the boundaries of his own surveillance.

The Thought-Alteration Probe. He consciously formed the idea of traveling to the Heavenly Demon Sect — something flatly against his own cautious instincts regarding his high-level techniques — purely to see if he'd actually go. The decision, when it came, arrived as subconscious pattern-recognition rather than visible deliberation, so watching enemies saw only a "natural" choice forming. He went. The probe confirmed active interference with precision.

The Ji Changchen Calibration. When Immortal guidance nudged him toward Ji Changchen, he didn't resist — he let the guidance run its course to learn its exact texture and limits, verifying no Space Lock was present at each step and keeping his Spatial Order ready as an exit. The result was a deliberately *open* trap: Spirit Stones scattered in plain view, a ring surrendered first. Liang Shuiyun recognized the danger and had no way to avoid it anyway. The take: a million Spirit Stones and a Heavenly Lotus — and a confirmed structural principle: his enemies will protect him whenever it serves their own purposes.

The Lin Fan Intelligence Harvest. When Lin Fan "accidentally" let slip information about Wang Xueyao and the Immortals, Li Gang classified him as either a con artist or a genuine reincarnator and moved to Soul Search him to find out. The operation ran on multiple simultaneous tracks: Chen Tao mapped Lin Fan's contact network (revealing it ran on blackmail); Li Meiying's fear response, when probed, confirmed active leverage over her; a 50+ person hunting party was assembled with Xi Chen embedded as a hidden assassin instructed to play dead and strike later; Lin Fan was tracked to the statistically safest point a paranoid reincarnator could choose — the intersection of four danger zones — and struck at the exact moment of maximum vulnerability, mid pill-refinement. The harvested memories confirmed the entire framework built at the Awakening Ceremony (the Immortal hierarchy, higher-dimensional existence, Emperor-level beings, soul-parasitism) and validated the cue-based method externally. Crucially, the fact that a third party had filtered what higher-dimensional information reached him confirmed that a faction *within* the Emperors needed him alive and had been quietly protecting him without his knowledge. He deliberately left most of the harvested memory unprocessed — preserving information asymmetry as a resource for later.

X. Neutralizing the Law of Unpredictability — A Side Effect, Not a Target

The Law grips only *live conscious decisions* — it cannot reach into the past or touch something already decided at the subconscious level. The cue to attack the Shu Dynasty had been embedded during the Awakening Ceremony, years before any live

decision point existed. When the "decision" to attack finally surfaced, it wasn't actually being made in that moment — it already had been, long before, below the threshold the Law can grip. The architecture built purely to defeat thought-surveillance defeated the Law of Unpredictability as a structural side effect, without Li Gang ever needing to identify the Law by name.

That same cue did double duty: embedded in his memories, it functioned as a message for Jin Huang to decode later through their marriage soul-connection — confirming for her that the timeline had been reset, that the Forbidden Land's placement was structural rather than coincidental, and that the battle's location was deliberate.

XI. The Timeless Demon God Persona — And the Open Trap

Receiving Lin Fan's vast ancient memory legacy, Li Gang made a move that looked irrational to every conventional cultivator watching: he absorbed the imprint but deliberately refused to unpack or assimilate it, leaving it suspended and encrypted. Only an entity of supreme cosmic standing would treat an immortal inheritance with such casual indifference — which is exactly the conclusion the watching Immortals reached on their own, via their own biases. Li Gang had known beforehand (again, source unexplained) that the Immortals held a deep, fearful grudge against the legendary Timeless Demon God; letting them believe he *was* that god was a ragebait on a civilizational scale — they'd been unknowingly building the path for their own greatest enemy the entire time. The persona wasn't a costume he consciously performed; it was a coherent *behavioral pattern*, observed from outside, that told an internally consistent story: the scope of his schemes fit a reincarnated Demon God; his unconventional poison-cultivation path fit a Demon God reborn into a spiritually starved continent; and his resistance during the forced Domination declaration fit a god protecting his autonomy.

The Su Zun dialogue, precisely. The self-validation cue fired the instant he formed a goal other than peace, permanently recording proof of thought-alteration. He visibly fought the forced declaration — slow speech, apparent resistance — then shouted "DOMINATION" with deliberate emphasis. Immortal Zhu saw straight through the taunt — and that was the point. Internally, at the subconscious layer, the forced declaration had collided with his real desire ("Peace"), and the Immortals recognized this contradiction as a calculated trap — but one that sealed itself shut either way: forcing him to choose Domination outright would make him instantly aware his thoughts were being altered; backing off meant conceding the fragment inside him. An open scheme functions precisely *because* it's open: if your enemy's only options are "stop it and fall into the trap" or "don't stop it and hand over what I want," then telling them the plan is itself the weapon. The same logic ran through the Ji Changchen extortion (Liang Shuiyun knew it was dangerous and had no alternative) and, later, the marriage to Jin Huang — where Immortal Chen's own intervention to stop the memory-reading was itself the trap closing.

XII. The Northern Continent Campaign — Infrastructure, Not the Objective

Routinely mistaken by every observing faction as Li Gang's primary goal, the campaign was actually built to buy time, resources, positional dominance, and demonstrated capability while the real war stayed invisible underneath it.

Renhuo Trading — named for "kindness" and "fire," appealing to idealists and power-seekers alike while aligning with his Ren alias — trained its sellers in storage, pill basics, and operational knowledge as cover for systematic ideological conditioning, seeding loyal agents into courts across the continent. Parallel product lines in formations and forging made Renhuo economically indispensable specifically to Wei, shifting real power away from the throne without a single political confrontation. To outside observers it was commerce; underneath, it was simultaneously a spy network, a conditioning apparatus, a revenue engine, and soft-power projection.

The Wei Dynasty binding — Twin Poison Architecture:

1. **Large-scale infiltration of Wei's alchemists and junior warriors, *expecting* exposure — because sophisticated latent poisons had already been seeded in his own targets before he ever met King Wei Han.**
2. **When Wei Han sprang his trap and imprisoned Li Gang, the arrest itself was the mechanism: a pre-arranged Demonic Faction arrival with antidotes forced Wei to need Li Gang more than fear him, and the imprisonment caused him to relax his guard into further exposure.**
3. **Senior alchemists carried a latent toxin activatable by a gas his spies could release post-arrest; junior disciples — including Third Prince Wei Chan — carried a second, compatible poison dormant until triggered by a catalyst hidden inside the Demonic antidote itself. Li Gang predicted Wei Han would test the antidote on the young first to protect the dynasty's future, personally worsening their condition through that very protective instinct, and collapse under guilt. His virtue became the lever; his conscience, the fulcrum; his love for his heir, the blade.**
4. **A one-week antidote demonstrated usefulness — then a Rank 6 Corruption Poison targeting the Heavenly Core directly converted a one-off crisis into permanent dependency. Wei Han kept his righteous image; his autonomy was gone.**
5. **Even Wei Han *discovering* the spy network was prearranged, not a setback recovered from — discovery, arrest, crisis, and dependency were the sequence, planned from the start.**

The 10,000-Man Rotating Circular Maze Formation. Facing 5 million Shu troops under the brilliant Shu Pang with only 1.5 million Wei warriors, Li Gang studied classic formations (circular, sword, eagle, snake, lotus) and built a hybrid: rotating internal layers that prevented stable enemy pressure anywhere, concealed inner archer rings,

shield inscriptions that blinded Shu Pang's spiritual scouting entirely, and a deliberately exposed front entrance baiting Shu's snake formation inward. Over a decade, he hand-selected warriors with Earth-type defensive imprints and conditioned them to swap attack/defense roles on micro-timing — manufacturing a living machine, not training an army.

The maze was never meant to be unbreakable. Li Gang accepted from the start that Shu Pang would eventually crack it, and built the formation so that cracking it would cost more than victory was worth — dynamic gap-closing, archers punishing any stall, defensive thresholds high enough that exploiting any weak point was slow and brutal. The design equation: Shu Pang's local tactical victory (reaching the core) would coincide exactly with the near-total annihilation of Shu's army. Winning the engagement meant losing the war. He accepted losing the formation to win the campaign — and after 4.7 million Shu deaths, met Shu Pang at the core with genuine respect rather than dominance, then let Shu Pang see the full battlefield with his own eyes, converting a proud general into a living monument to the inevitability of Li Gang's victory.

Binding Jin Long. He shared the shield-inscription array formula with the Golden Crow king, correctly predicting Jin Long's greed and rationality would drive him to massacre every witness to monopolize it — and in doing so, permanently weld Golden Crow's military doctrine to Renhuo's framework. A gift became a leash, with no visible transaction of control.

The lure of Master Huang and Master Lei. The Northern Continent's lower power ceiling was chosen specifically to limit outside interference, and the entire multi-million-soldier war existed partly to justify deploying space-locking arrays large enough to tempt Huang and Lei's greed into building (and thereby revealing) a massive space-lock formation. Li Gang deduced Shu Pang was personally carrying the formation's core from the disproportionate zeal of his guards, had disguised warriors swap in for Shu soldiers during targeted strikes, and stripped him of every spatial ring, leaving fakes behind. Once the real core was in Li Gang's hands, Huang and Lei could no longer deactivate their own formation — permanently sealed inside the cage they'd built themselves.

What every faction concluded from watching all this: Immortals saw a comprehensible Demon-God domination scheme; Emperors saw behavior tracking neatly within their foreseen parameters; the Monarchs were gone, Golden Crow bound, Wei controlled. What none of them saw was that the campaign's real output was *time* — cultivation level, intelligence, and positional readiness for a confrontation none of them knew was coming.

XIII. Jin Huang — The Parallel Architect

Jin Huang read Li Gang's memories through their marriage soul-connection — before the marriage was formalized, something that should have been impossible. She achieved it by guiding every interaction so his own reasoning arrived where she

needed it, making her cooperation so immediately decisive that it triggered his *cautiousness* rather than his trust — and his cautious logic concluded, on its own, that marrying her was the safest way to neutralize an uncontrollable variable. She never overrode his psychology; she flowed through it.

When Immortal Chen discovered she'd been reading Li Gang's memories, he panicked and personally intervened — installing soul-blocking techniques and halting further access. This was exactly what she needed: because Chen himself stopped her, no Immortal would ever suspect she'd already extracted everything beforehand. The enemy wrote his own cover story.

With what she'd absorbed, she embedded her own set of psychological cues using the same subconscious architecture, ensuring the knowledge would surface only at the right moments rather than sitting exposed to monitoring. She then left for the Central Continent, married Ji Changchen, and embedded herself inside the Celestial Sect's power structure — a path that existed nowhere in the Timeless Demon God's extracted memories, meaning it became a genuine, unaccounted-for anomaly in the Emperors' predictive model from that point forward.

XIV. The Body-Possession Crisis — Catastrophe as Intelligence Windfall

After the Northern Continent battle, Huang and Lei parasitized Li Gang and Shi Tian. What looked like disaster became a reconstruction exercise from almost nothing:

- **His Spatial Order had been drained silently — requiring Emperor-level skill, meaning it was deliberate misdirection meant to make him discard it voluntarily, severing his best escape route and Lei's tracking in one move. He discarded it anyway, denying Lei the tracking while appearing to have simply lost it.**
- **Four days were missing from the local calendar — he'd been active, under outside control, and put back to sleep with no memory of the gap.**
- **Cross-referenced against Lin Fan's processed memories on soul parasitism (one-to-two-day active sessions, roughly one-day gaps, one parasite per host maximum), he reconstructed the entire picture: Huang was in him, Lei in Shi Tian; Huang's exact identity; the rough shape of Lei's movements and his plan to reach Prince Jin Bo through a false decree via Shi Tian; and why Huang had needed the Spatial Order discarded in the first place.**

All of this while severely injured, alone, in a stranger's home. He warned Chen Wang his master was in danger before Chen Wang had any reason to believe it — using the sheer precision of his knowledge as the only weapon available — and simultaneously dispatched a thirteen-year-old, Chu You, to Jin Bo's court ahead of Lei, planting a counter-pawn inside a conspiracy the enemy hadn't finished revealing.

XV. Azure Mountain — The Catastrophe Completes

Everything converges here. To outside witnesses, the total destruction of Azure Mountain and the slaughter of the clan was Li Gang's defining failure. In reality it was the engineered ignition switch: the psychological magnitude of the loss triggered a genuine, simultaneous shutdown of conscious *and* subconscious faculties — the exact, near-impossible precondition for the Special Ability, achieved without Li Gang ever consciously planning his own breakdown. This was never battlefield luck; the precise psychological parameters had been isolated through years of internal study, and Azure Mountain was built, across that whole chain of intermediaries, specifically to furnish it.

The activation shattered the fragile balance among the highest powers at once: Immortal Zhu moved to intervene directly, Wang Xueyao deployed overwhelming force in response, and the Elemental Emperor hung back, still maneuvering from the shadows. Li Gang's original expectation — that the Elemental Emperor would also be drawn into the fight by greed for the Special Ability — didn't happen; the Law of Unpredictability saw to that, as it tends to with any single foreseen outcome. What he also hadn't expected: Wang Xueyao proved strong enough to kill Immortal Zhu outright, which the original plan hadn't accounted for at all.

XVI. The Special Ability Trap, In Full

The Ability itself was so powerful its mere existence nearly destabilized the Divine Spirit World the moment Immortal Zhu first sensed it. The Creator deliberately damaged it before rebirth specifically so that activation would cause separation — turning a weapon into bait. The broken state *was* the lure; the separation *was* the trigger; the apparent stealability *was* the kill switch.

The Timeless Demon God persona wasn't incidental to this — it was load-bearing. Zhu needed a coherent explanation for why Li Gang had such an Ability, why it was damaged in a way that caused separation, and why theft genuinely seemed possible. "Reincarnated Demon God, Ability damaged by the rebirth process" answered all three at once, logically and completely. Complete-seeming information is what closes traps on intelligent people — and the persona supplied it.

The full chain, assembled: Huang Shu builds factional hostility → Li Gang appears as an internal threat to his own family, compounding external pressure → the Immortals hold his parents hostage, generating ongoing dread rather than completed grief → Wu Yuan's own desires, channeled through Huang Shu, produce the village's destruction without Li Gang directing it → the escape to the Central Continent creates both the "returning home" structure and a timeline divergence → Huang Shu's own death ensures Wu Yuan has fresh leverage to wield → the return home produces total, apparent loss and involuntary shutdown → the Special Ability activates, separates, and appears stealable → Immortal Zhu attempts the theft → the trap, engineered before Li Gang was even born, closes.

Zhu's final words capture the whole shape of it: *"You had always been the Creator! But why did you scheme against me? If you had asked, I would have directly*

sacrificed my life for you!" **The elaborate deception was never strictly necessary for Li Gang's survival — Zhu would have served him willingly if simply asked. It was necessary because the plan required Zhu's death to happen in *this specific way*: through his own greed, grasping at something that was never his, for reasons that extend past even Zhu's own comprehension. The Creator didn't need to outwit Immortal Zhu. He needed Immortal Zhu to outwit himself.**

XVII. Four Layers of One Reality

- **Surface: a cautious, unusually sharp warrior clawing power out of a hostile world through alchemy, commerce, and scheming — exceptional, but comprehensible.**
- **Immortal Zhu's belief: the Timeless Demon God reincarnated, running an impressive-but-legible domination scheme, with a damaged Ability that could be stolen once conditions aligned — a known, manageable quantity.**
- **Wang Xueyao and the Emperors' read: *possibly* the Creator, based on his memory-absorption capacity and the Ability's nature — worth testing and selectively protecting, not yet fully characterized.**
- **Reality: the Creator, who planned the entire architecture before rebirth, built it to run below his own conscious awareness so watching enemies saw only authentic human psychology, engineered his greatest enemies' deaths through their own reasoning and their own desires, and needed no concealment for the deepest layer at all — because the most complete deception is the one the enemy finishes with their own hands, certain the whole time that the choice was theirs.**

XVIII. What the Whole Architecture Actually Produced

Nothing here was a parallel scheme running alongside the others — it was one root system. The Northern Continent campaign bought time while every faction thought it was the real war. The maze formation simultaneously gutted Shu's army, proved Renhuo's doctrine to Jin Long, lured Huang and Lei into a kill-zone, justified the scale needed for space-locking arrays, and set up the exact circumstances for the body-possession crisis — which became an intelligence windfall, which enabled the counter-play against Lei, which bought more time for the next phase. Every branch fed every other branch.

And the final, load-bearing irony: Li Gang himself never knew the full plan while living it. He *couldn't* — conscious knowledge would have made it readable, and readable means defeatable. He walked through decisions that felt like genuine preference and honest intuition, understanding the plan's necessity only in the abstract, from before he was even born, while navigating its actual steps one at a time — trusting an architecture he'd built in thirty unobserved minutes to carry a version of himself who didn't know it existed all the way through.

He did not outsmart his enemies move by move. He built the world in which their own intelligence became the weapon that destroyed them.

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